AUGUST
th
23
5c

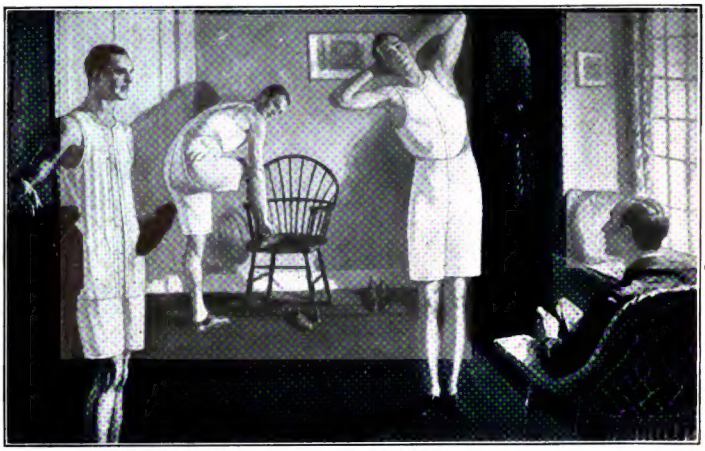
THREE TIMES A MONTH

Adventure

Talbot Mundy
Frederick R. Bechdolt
Philip M. Fisher, Jr.
W. C. Tuttle
George E. Holt
Harold Lamb
H. M. Sutherland
Royce Brier
John Webb

1 Complete Novel
2 Complete Novelette

V. 42
UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



They know why they prefer "B.V. D."

THOSE clear thinking fellows who have found that it pays to keep "fit as a fiddle" are especially exacting in matters of personal comfort. They value the Unvarying Quality, Famous Fit and Long Wear assured by the "B.V.D." Red Woven Label.

From raw material to finished product we practice ceaseless care so that every "B.V.D." garment is of the quality that has brought world-wide preference for our product.

The cool, durable nainsook of "B.V.D." is woven in our own mills from selected cotton and finished in our bleachery.

In our factories vigilant inspection guards every process of skillful cutting, sturdy stitching, well sewn buttons and accurate finish.

There is only one "B.V.D." Underwear
It is always identified by this Red Woven Label

Union Suits
(Pat. U.S.A.)
Men's $1.50 and upward
the suit
Youths' 85c the suit

MADE FOR THE
B.V.D.
BEST RETAIL TRADE
(Trade Mark Reg. U.S. Pat. Off. and Foreign Countries)

Undershirts and
Drawers
85c and upward
the garment

The B.V.D. COMPANY, Inc., New York
Sole Makers of "B.V.D." Underwear

©1923
The B.V.D. Co., Inc.

"NEXT TO MYSELF I LIKE 'B.V.D.' BEST"

Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

AP2
A3
142

Published Three Times a Month by THE RIDGWAY COMPANY

J. H. GANNON, President — C. H. HOLMES, Secretary and Treasurer

Spring and Macdougal Streets - - New York, N. Y.
6, Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C., England

Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 1, 1910, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, Editor

Yearly Subscription, $6.00 in advance — **Single Copy, Twenty-Five Cents**

Foreign postage, $3.00 additional. Canadian postage, 90 cents.

Trade-Mark Registered; Copyright, 1923, by The Ridgway Company in the United States and Great Britain. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England.

The editor assumes no risk for manuscripts and illustrations submitted to this magazine, but he will use all due care while they are in his hands.

Contents for August 10th, 1923, Issue

Diana Against Ephesians *A Complete Novel* . . . . . **Talbot Mundy** 3
India—*Ommony*, intrigue and trees.

Some Wild Western Law . . . . . **John L. Considine** 70

Strong and Weak . . . . . **John Webb** 72
Caribbean—courage; and brother against brother.

Free Water . . . . . **Royce Brier** 81
The desert—"the water-barrels are gone!" screamed *Lem*.

Slants on Life *Immigration* . . . . . **Bill Adams** 88

A Certain Rich Man *An Incident in the Affairs of Mohamed Ali*
Morocco—a deal in rubies. **George E. Holt** 89

The Three Palladins *A Three-Part Story Part II* . . . **Harold Lamb** 94
Asia—across the Gobi to the land of *Prester John*.

The Fantom Army . . . . . **Hugh Pendexter** 119

Quays *Verse* . . . . . **A. Judson Hanna** 120

Sir Piegan Passes *A Complete Novelette* . . . . . **W. C. Tuttle** 121
The West—an impromptu bad-man gets a job.

Vince's Bridge at San Jacinto *An Incident in the War with Mexico*
Lewis Appleton Barker 136

Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.

(Continued on next page)

Digitized by Google 779984 Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

(Continued from preceding page)

A Sound *A Complete Novelette* . . . . . **H. M. Sutherland** 137
Kentucky mountains—a feud starts again.

Stranger Than Fiction *Verse* . . . . . **Rex George Fuller** 151

Prepared . . . . . **Philip M. Fisher, Jr.** 153
Sea—a pearl, a beach-comber and Fate.

Some Adventures of Jedediah Smith . . . . . **Frederick R. Bechdolt** 162
The wilderness—untrodden except by red men.

The Camp-Fire A free-to-all meeting-place for readers, writers and adventurers 174

Various Practical Services Free to Any Reader 183

Ask Adventure 184

Radio 186

Mining and Prospecting 186

Old Songs That Men Have Sung 186

Weapons, Past and Present 186

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing 186

Tropical Forestry 186

Aviation 186

Lost Trails 191

The Trail Ahead 192

Headings . . . . . **Bernard Westmacott**

Cover Design . . . . . **James C. McKell**

A New Serial; Three Complete Novelettes

THE "free and independent State" of Rio Negro has revolted from Venezuela; *Adriano Fombombo* has set himself up as dictator; and *Thomas Strawbridge*, the peppy American drummer, is out to get a big order for firearms from him. That's the start-off of "FOMBOMBO," a four-part story, by T. S. Stribling, which begins in the next issue.

IN THE gray islands north of Scotland *Swain* the youth came upon a strange dragon ship. Not knowing whether the people on her were Norsemen or Iceland outlaws, Swain demanded to know what they did, for this was his father's land. *Frakork* the witch and *Olvir*, her grandson, mocked him with strange words, and from this began a feud which was to be finished only in a sea of blood and the burning of peaceful hamlets. "SWAIN'S STONE," by Arthur D. Howden Smith, a complete novelette in the next issue, is the first adventure of *Swain*, the son of *Olaf*.

YOUNG *Jeff Hailey* had derisively named his elder brothers "the Apostle of Peace and the Apostle of Violence," and every one who knew the three cow-punchers said they had nothing in common except their skill at punching cows. Therefore the posse that set out after the Apostle of Violence one day expected no concerted family resistance, and therefore the posse received a considerable surprize. "NOT THREE OF A KIND," by Frank Robertson, a novelette complete in the next issue.

AN ECHO of the great war sounds in New Caledonia when *Tanda*, the native, flushed with his power in France, seizes the rulership of his village. Aided by one trader, thwarted by another, the inevitable happens, and on this smiling island a bloody replica of Flanders fields is reenacted. "IN THE RAIN," a complete novelette by J. D Newsom in the next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.

***Adventure* is out on the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month**

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Adventure
August 10th 1923
Vol. XLII No. 1

DIANA AGAINST EPHESIANS

A Complete Novel

by Talbot Mundy

Author of "Treason," "The Nine Unknown," etc.

CHAPTER I

Slow, but sure—the Lord providing foresters.

SUCCESS in public service is the deuce. In a democracy they hate you. In any other kind of country you are overworked. India, Porto Rico and the Philippines, controlled by alleged democracies, are in both categories; their faithful men are overworked and hated, both, while mainly unrewarded.

In India they receive a meed of liking on the spot occasionally, but are scorned as bores and an expense by "those in authority over them"—*vide* the Church of England catechism. "Those," of course, are the home-keeping men, who swing the votes and the money. In Porto Rico's case and others they are lauded in the pro-Administration newspapers as "splendid representatives of Uncle Sam," whereas the island folk, conceding the description, dislike them no less for it.

But there are compensations. In India you get transferred and lent from pillar to post to cover the delinquencies of other men; but you may go, like Cottswold Ommony, in a barge with sixteen rowers down mile-wide waterways illumined by an Indian moon.

Howard Craig, of Little Cold Springs near Omaha, Baptist missionary, says it is the same moon that shines everywhere; but Ommony refuses to believe him. What Ommony does not believe, and what he does, have caused him to fall foul of lots of men like Craig. He scorns the history books as poisonous fiction, the Bible as Hebrew politics mixed up with plagiarized mid-Asian ethics, and modern civilization as a shoddy rehash of the worst of Rome, Egypt, Babylon and Greece, pasted and held together by matter-worship, which is another name—so he says—for modern

"Diana Against Ephesians," copyright, 1923, by Talbot Mundy.

Copyright, 1923, by The Ridgway Company in the United States and Great Britain. All rights reserved.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

science. But he is the happiest man in India.

Concede him, though, no merit on the ground of contentment while the long sweeps rowed him southward, beating time to a song the boatmen's ancestors had sung a thousand years ago. For as the King of England is the son of England's king, so rowers are the sons of rowers, songs are the development of one song, and the same short, deep stroke drives maharaja's boats as always did keep time to steersman's chanting, banishing discontent.

Nowadays the maharaja owns a motor-boat; that is the fashion. Miserable men, like viceroys and their secretaries, who must move with the times, and American millionaires, who believe they know what is due them, are conceded seats in the hot, vibrating, noisy machine that hurries them into the picture and out again before they can spoil it. So gasoline has virtue.

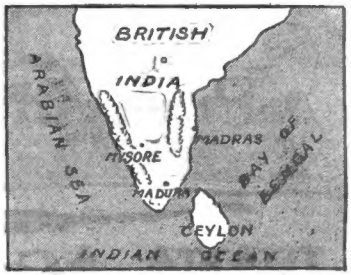
But men who are known only by the work they do, and have no press notices, may enjoy the ancient pageantry. Cottswold Ommony leaned back under a moving canopy of colored stars in a stern seat that had been a royal throne, and his enormous dog Diana stood in the bows, rigid as a carving, baying whenever the temple bells ashore offended her. She looked like a figurehead—part of the boat.

There was a temple to every fifty yards of water-front, with palaces behind them and between. Branch water-lanes led at random amid fields and villages, and along all shore-fronts danced the new-moon-shaped lateens. There was no moon; but the stars seemed overcharged with light, and the Milky Way was awash with liquid fire.

Down in the boat's waist, where the guns stuck up between the blanket-roll and leather bags, sat Ommony's two servants; and forward, in the break below the little deck on which Diana the wolf-hound stood, was Toto, her attendant, expert at extracting fleas and thorns, eighteen years old and regarded in his own home circle as a made man. In deference to Ommony and the great Diana—not of Ephesus—he had postponed his wedding until this present wandering was over.

For Ommony was of the old school, miscalled feudal by its modern critics. Who served him, he served. It was as sure as that tomorrow's sun would shine that Cottswold Ommony would never leave India to draw his pension with even a dog-boy behind him unprovided for. Men knew that, although Ommony had never said it, and he was waited on accordingly.

They swung along a water-lane in which the stars and every shore-light were a million times reflected. The jewels of Indian legend and the mystery of Indian custom based on fifty thousand years of fact, were all about them, nothing inscrutable to men with eyes, but dark, annoying and unreal to all who think the West will conquer the East in the long run.



Because they thought and lived in terms of an eternity far older than the stars, they rowed the stars down, unwearied, and the great hound in the bow stood shimmering gold in the rays of the rising sun, betraying what men and animals call life at last when she swayed her tail with mannerly reserve at another boat that shot forth from a landing beside temple-steps and ranged alongside.

"Mr. Ommony? I'm Craig. I'm glad to meet you."

A tall, good-looking man with iron-gray hair that was longer and fuller than Englishmen wear theirs as a rule, dressed in white drill and a soft gray Stetson hat, stood up in the stern of the other boat and offered his hand.

"I've heard of you," said Ommony with truth.

He had heard much of many missionaries, and as to this man had had warning.

"Fine!" said Craig. "I've heard of you, too. They tell me you're the best forester in India. As soon as we knew you were coming we made a room ready at the mission. Mrs. Craig will try to make you comfortable. She has looked forward to this. You're the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

first white man to stay with us since the Committee of Inspection three years ago. I tell you, man, you're welcome!"

"You're good," said Ommony. "I'll come to breakfast, but I can't stay."

Craig's face fell. Ommony, eying him soberly under the brim of the helmet he had donned at sunrise, divined unseen causes and subsurface currents. He was glad he had refused the invitation. Reason rallied to acclaim the intuition. But he liked the look of his would-be host well enough to offer an excuse, and was glad he could do it without much stretching of the truth.

"You see, Mr. Craig, I'm loaned by the Woods and Forests. It's the maharaja's duty to lodge me properly, and he'd feel hurt if I ignored that. You know how these princes are."

Howard Craig knew too well—knew, too, that Ommony was not giving his whole reason. Dame Rumor is a jade, but sometimes just, and he had heard of this middle-aged man with a head so well set on his neck and a rather belligerent expression not nearly hidden by a grizzled, short beard, that he dared decline any offer, princely entertainment not excepted.

"Mrs. Craig will be disappointed," he said; but Ommony had also heard of Mrs. Craig, and he betrayed no symptoms of relenting.

He has been accused of hating women—a manifest absurdity, as will appear.

AT THE quay, where there were great iron rings as old as the days of Hiram Abiff set in stonework that none knew who laid in place, Craig had a swarm of mission servants and hangers-on waiting to pick up Ommony's belongings. Ommony demurred.

"The maharaja's men——"

"May come to the mission," Craig interrupted. "You're a white man——"

"Born in London," Ommony admitted.

"And a Christian——"

Ommony raised his eyebrows. Having had no breakfast, he declined that argument.

"—It's only right you should receive our hospitality. We're one color, if of a separate flag, Mr. Ommony; and you may feel need of the moral support of your religion before you're through here. The superstitious darkness of this native State is indescribable."

"I'll wager you've tried to describe it," Ommony answered, smiling, tucking under his arm the rifle that he never allowed to be touched by any one except himself and one *jungli*—in this instance left behind. "Come here, Diana. Never bite this man. You understand me?"

The great hound looked at Craig and sniffed him, slowly swaying her tail, puzzled but obedient. The boatmen, who had orders, but were growing used to missionary ways, watched Ommony, hoping he would steer them out of a predicament. He read the dumb perplexity.

"Any one ill at the mission?" he asked.

"Nothing that need frighten you," Craig answered. "Nothing contagious. Only a man with a broken leg and a ——"

Ommony, interrupting, turned away from him and spoke to the head boatman in a tongue few missionaries know—and they not Protestants:

"Pay compliments to *diwan sahib*. Say I go to mission house to do what is possible for man with broken leg. Ask *diwan sahib* graciously to send men for my luggage after breakfast."

The boatmen grinned. The *diwan* was the maharaja's representative. Their maharaja was a poor thing possibly, but theirs, and they preferred him above all the advance agents of penny plain religions, their own being twopence colored and prodigiously more comforting to eye and ear, establishing for instance, that their maharaja was descended from the gods—the moon specifically; and they grinned because Ommony had recognized the royal prerogative. With the aid of a suitable lie or two they could now assure their prince that all due precedence had been observed. They ran off full of laughter, and Craig vaguely resented it.

"You can't tell whether they're laughing at us or at something else," he complained.

"That's easy—us!" said Ommony. "Don't you think we're laughable—teaching our great-grandmother to suck eggs?"

"You mean—?" asked Craig.

"Let's not keep Mrs. Craig waiting," Ommony suggested.

Craig was silent, wondering at this sturdy fellow with a gun under his arm, who strode beside him as if down forest-lanes and spoke like one who knew men. He had heard a world of things of Ommony, some good, some bad. A human being then undoubtedly. A man, they said, who feared no

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Government and no superior, but whom a million ignorant villagers looked up to, preferring his pronouncements to the law. Not an anarchist then, nor a totally bad man, for of their own free will folk do not submit to rogues. He knew too well how hardly they submit themselves even to imported righteousness and sacrament.

Not a wholly good man, Craig decided, although not dissolute; none of the marks of vicious living were impressed on him. Wanton possibly. Too prone to trust his own opinion and to forfeit that of others for the sake of independence. A free thinker. Godless? Well, he hoped not.

And Ommony, who had received official warning about Craig, pursued the even tenor of his way unprejudiced. He had heard too often of other men being warned against himself to attach the slightest importance to unproven hearsay. Each man obscurely knew that as far as things had gone he liked the other, but that was to be expected of Ommony, who liked or detested. Craig kept reservations. Ommony crossed each bridge as he came to it.

And even more reserved than her husband was Mrs. Craig, emerging from the screened veranda of a tidy, thatched house, smiling a welcome and wondering what the guest was going to bring into her life. Strangers can so easily upset things. She was almost glad—hardly able to look disappointed—when Craig blurted out that Ommony would only stay for breakfast; and she fell back on scolding Craig to cover her embarrassment. Why had he brought the luggage from the boat if Mr. Ommony wanted it elsewhere?

She was younger than Craig and equally good-looking, but her seriousness rather had the air of being laid on and then bitten in, whereas his was natural. She was thirty or thereabouts. Ten years earlier she might have laughed without warning and without assuring herself first that it was right to laugh. If so, she would have been a very pretty woman.

There were signs of dimples, not yet quite ironed out by duty. She had violet eyes, expressive of much thought, not all of it somber; lips that ought to have been kissed—and may have been when Craig was wooing, but not much since; a line of hair cut straight across her forehead above level eyebrows; and feet that could have danced. Not that Ommony is any dancer, except for policy and exercise and his partner's sins; he merely observed a natural fact.

She had a trim, light figure, brown hair, and once on a time was no doubt called a "sweet girl" by her elders in Curlew, Oklahoma. Craig had never satisfied himself that sweetness is not vice.

"The man we sent up a palm-tree to watch for your boat said there was a golden calf in the bows. Breakfast's ready," she added pleasantly. "Does the golden calf eat breakfast? Does she come into people's houses? What a simply adorable dog!"

Diana was commanded to make friends while Craig frowned thoughtfully. Ommony recalled to mind the patient with a broken leg and asked to see him.

"Why, are you a doctor?" Elsa Craig demanded.

"A tactician."

Ommony saw her raise her eyebrows at her husband; but she led the way promptly to a cool, screened outhouse in the rear of the compound, where a convert from one of the basest forms of Hinduism lay at ease.

Ommony hardly looked at the man. He seemed to think the details of the case irrelevent. The clean, sweet-smelling room made no perceptible impression; he was more interested in Diana's nose sniffing against the screen from outside than in the carefully written card at the foot of the bed. He turned on Elsa Craig in the midst of her description of the case and interrupted:

"If anybody asks you, please say I came first thing to see the patient."

"But you haven't looked at him! You're not even listening to his history!"

She was piqued. Even unenthusiastic fishermen like boasting of the taken fish.

"I'll make the man remember me," said Ommony, and dug down in his pocket.

"No, no!" she objected instantly. "We don't allow that! This is *not* one of those missions. Presents are against the rule. They come because they want to be Christians, or they stay away. We don't bribe them to come here. Rather we expect them to contribute."

"Good," said Ommony, continuing to dig and thumbing loose a ten-rupee note. "Nobody ever gave this man a tip?"

"Not since he came here."

"Then he'll certainly remember me!"

He gave the man the ten rupees and met the obsequious salaam with a steady gaze that was unforgettable because it was the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

stare of intelligence making use of an inquiring mind. The stranger with a shut mind and blown-in-the-glass convictions is the one whose features and conversation men forget.

"Who are you that you should break our rule?" Elsa Craig demanded irritably.

"Only you can break yours. I observed my own. You can't make rules for me," he answered, and she saw laughter in his eyes, although his face was sober.

He was not mocking her, he was amused.

"Love of money is the—" she began to quote resentfully.

"You should have kept me out if you didn't want your convert corrupted," he assured her; then, looking again at the patient: "I'm Ommony sahib. Come and see me when you're well."

Elsa Craig, indignant, led the way out. She knew in her heart that what she resented was his having brushed aside a falsehood she had schooled herself to accept as truth. She did not mind his ruthless recognition of essentials, but she did mind his applying it to herself and her affairs. He had no right to doubt her husband's converts. And his first words, outside in the garden among the well-kept palms and flowers, only increased her anger.

"That's a bad rascal you have in there! Don't trust him!"

"Then why do you want him to come and see you?"

"So he'll remember my visit. What's his name?"

"It was on the card. John Ishmittee. He can't say Smith."

"What in heaven——?"

Ommony stopped, turned and stared at her—not rudely, and she knew it. He was just astonished.

"He had another name. He had a past," she answered. "When he adopted a true religion he asked us to change his name, and we arranged it legally. He had a right to turn his back on all the past."

Ommony nodded, conceding all the claims of tolerance in full, but not of incongruity or humbug.

"Our backs are to what's behind us," he admitted. "He's facing a future, though."

"Is that why you bribed him?" she retorted acidly.

"Yes. Pay men in their own coin or they're not bought. Your coffee smells like a breath of Allah's heaven!"

She felt herself thaw, and resented that, too. If he had said simply "heaven" and had omitted "Allah," she could almost have forgiven him the earlier offenses; because not even the viceroy—and surely no bishop's wife—enjoyed such coffee as she set on the table. It was her connecting link with home, departing youth and memories that she was never willing to let quite die, although they hurt. Whoever praised her housekeeping, and her coffee before all, touched the cord in her that had not hardened.

"Are you a Moslem?" she objected.

"Ask Allah that!" he answered with a curt laugh.

"We'll all be surprized to discover what we really are when our time comes."

She froze again, suspecting that he knew, or that he thought he knew, what she was, though he had said no word that hinted it. She even knew he was sympathetic. He was like a surgeon, who cut deep and then looked under the bandages.

She felt that he had peered into the depths of her thought and understood, and that he was sorry for her and no more inclined to be ruled by her limitations than an eagle is to wear blinkers. The little conventional lies that he tolerated for the sake of courtesy meant no more to him than the big ones that he challenged on sight. Without saying a word, he seemed to her to have challenged her whole overlaid philosophy, which she had been ten years studying and smoothing, until she herself hardly knew it any longer for a lie.

No living man could do that and not be her enemy. No man could be her enemy and not sustain defeat if victory were in her. She smiled the little, hard, too-knowing smile that had cost her the love of a man in the States and married her to a missionary, who believed that sex was something to be ashamed of. She thought that Ommony did not see the smile.

Her husband saw it, standing in the door of the heavily screened veranda, and imagined they were friends already. He prided himself on never entertaining jealousy—on always recognizing facts—on imperturbable good humor.

"Eatmetights!" he called to them. "Wheats! Ham and! Let's play we're in the West!"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

OMMONY played with him. They sat down *vis-à-vis* and trailed reminiscences, Ommony making fun of his own mis-adventures in the States, what time he used a saved-up leave in search of forestry and found none.

But Elsa Craig—although they praised her coffee—was depressed; not one suggestion that her husband might have made could have had more unfortunate results that morning. To play at being in the West—to recall old times—on top of Ommony's surgery—was torture, no less. She was cross to the servants and gave all her breakfast to Diana, much to Ommony's concern.

"That dog's on a diet," he cautioned her. "They're hard to raise in this climate. One meal a day——"

She was glad. She was not mean enough to wage war on the dumb beast, but it was very good to cause Ommony even slight distress. She left off feeding the dog, not to oblige the master but because she admired the animal, making mental note that it tortured Ommony to see mismanagement he might prevent.

"How long do you expect to be here?" she asked him.

"Several months."

She was glad again. In time and with persistence one can make pain felt. She was almost, and on the surface quite, good-tempered when the meal was done and it was Craig's turn to show Ommony about the mission.

There was no risk of the maharaja sending men for his luggage yet, for that was southeast India — a native State — just warming up for the monsoon. Men were as lethargic as the flies.

"Many converts?" Ommony asked as they strode off side by side with the dog's nose between them, making free with Ommony's hand, thanking him for lawless ham and eggs provided by the enemy.

"Few. Slow progress. Slow but sure," Craig answered. "I have never tried for fireworks. Competition isn't keen here. No other Protestant denominations. I don't have to make a big superficial showing to get money. My private income helps out. Slow but sure's my motto—slow but sure, Mr. Ommony, the Lord providing."

"Providing foresters, for instance?"

Ommony looked straight at Craig. There was no evading his directness, although it was that and nothing more—no resentment—nothing sly—a straight question.

"Yes, sir, the Lord providing foresters—or one at any rate," Craig admitted. "You knew?"

"I know now."

Craig checked an exclamation of impatience. There had been no need to confess his hidden hand in the matter after all! He wished he had not admitted it. So many folk were too willing to accuse missionaries of interfering in politics; Ommony was doubtless like the rest.

However, he could not withdraw the confession. Explanation seemed the wise course.

"You see, Mr. Ommony, something *had* to be done. The maharaja is a weak man, alternately in the hands of his prime minister and a Hindu priest. Between them those two control the destinies of all these people."

Ommony's eyes twinkled. He had his own ideas of destiny and people, but he did not say anything.

"The priest is my deadly enemy. That's, of course, what you might expect," Craig went on. "You can hardly blame him. If I win, he loses. Converts to my religion mean increasing decay of his. I'd like to be his friend, but he won't let me."

Ommony contrived to look grave, but it was difficult.

"Have you offered to make friends with him?" he asked, looking the other way.

"Oh, yes. I was above-board. I even offered to pay his son's expenses to America, so he might see for himself what Christianity and civilization mean. But the man is so enwrapped in superstition and a sense of Brahminical importance that there's no penetrating his conceit. I gave it up.

"I have to confess we're enemies. I'm sorry. He offends me in all ways possible, and I try to act with forbearance, but fact is fact."

Ommony looked frankly at his host, sizing him up, considering the automatic, educated humor that would laugh at the accepted jokes and frown at all uncensored ones—the obstinate courage—the enthusiasm that no flood might quench—the perfect orthodoxy—the manners that were one thing and the man that was another—all clearly written on the fine, too serious face. He knew that he and that man would never enjoy the same paradise; but he hoped to

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

find a means of getting on with him in this world, in that city, for the present.

"Something *had* to be done," Craig continued. "It was no use talking to the raja, for I tried it. Each time the poor wretch entertained me he had to spend a week at the priest's dictation resanctifying himself. My very presence was pollution.

"So I tried the *diwan*. He's open to argument, and you can't say that for either priest or raja. The *diwan* is jealous of the priest—that's natural—resents all interference of the church in politics. As an American I was able to agree with him in that respect without reservation. I made it clear my friendship might be worth his while."

Ommony laughed outright—one clear, "Hah!"

"What amuses you?" asked Craig.

"The church in politics. Go on."

"I told the *diwan* what this State needs is forestry. Christ, and then forestry. The British confer knighthoods on men who put through great public improvements. I happen to know he is anxious for knighthood.

"I assured him there are means at my disposal of calling the attention of Government to any good or evil he might do. Then I suggested that by public forestry on an extensive scale, he could not only serve his own case but inevitably injure the priest's. He saw it. The *diwan* has astuteness in a measure."

He paused for Ommony to ask the inevitable question. But Ommony judged it sufficient that he beat back laughter.

"Every tree cut down in this State pays a small tax to the priests—small, but in the aggregate immense," Craig went on after a dramatic pause. "So it is to the priests' interest that trees should be cut—to the *diwan's* and the people's to grow trees and conserve them."

It was Craig's turn to look keenly at Ommony. It occurred to him to wonder how his guest was taking this confession. Some twinge of an uneducated conscience not yet dead, antedating his appointment as a missionary, perhaps suggested that his guest might have opinions and a right to them. But as far as he could judge he had given no offense yet. Ommony, rubbing the dog's ear, strode beside him looking politely interested.

"The *diwan* is like all Orientals," he went on. "I could only get him to agree with me on condition he had his own way. He had heard of you. It was a case of you or nobody. If I could get you, then he was willing to defy the priests and go in for forest conservation seriously."

"And what were *you* to get out of this?" asked Ommony, controlling his voice but twitching the hound's ear so hard that she whimpered.

"Personally nothing, but the mission a great deal—those little, inconsiderable favors that amount to so much in the long run—an occasional visit by the *diwan*—recognition by the maharaja in the form of a small financial contribution, just for the sake of the principle involved. Above all the discontinuance of picketing. They are not to sit at the gate and hound my converts through the streets. The local papers are to discontinue scurrilous abuse of me and to cease telling lies about my methods. No pressure of any kind is to be brought to bear on our converts. Don't you think now I was justified in using influence to get you sent down here?"

"You're your own judge," Ommony answered.

He hated to be asked to pass on other men's mistakes.

"I mean, can you forgive me for——"

Ommony laughed curtly.

"You're not responsible for any move of mine," he answered. "They told me you were trying to pull wires. I looked into it and applied for the transfer."

Craig looked at him again, and stroked his chin, and wondered.

"I know the *diwan* rather well. He's a friend of mine," said Ommony, and Craig continued wondering.

CHAPTER II

"They conceded fish."

CRAIG presently felt his feet. Did he, Craig, not know all the wires he pulled, the influences he had brought to bear, the patience he had exercised to bring this essay into forestry to pass? Ommony, in his judgment, could no more have withstood the pressure than could any other cog in the immense machine of Indian government.

Ommony, he decided, was a vain man—one of those who, rather than confess themselves a part of a machine, must boast that they control it. Knowledge of human nature and of how to play on it is nearly the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

most valuable tool in any missionary's kit. Craig glanced at Ommony now with a changed expression in his eye, believing that he understood him.

Thenceforth he showed the mechanism of his mission in intimate detail, asking Ommony's advice wherever room might be for improvement and frequently where none was, and Craig knew it. As he had said, progress was slow; energy had had to find an outlet in perfecting processes rather than in caring for floods of converts, which in point of fact were non-existent. Four-and-twenty converts was the total, and even Craig admitted their conversion was a question of degree.

But there was a laundry, a carpentry, a printing-office, a loom and appurtenances for weaving homespun, and a school, besides the raw, new-fangled chapel dwarfed by the roof of a thousand-year-old Hindu temple that overshadowed it from beyond the compound wall. On the gravel path leading to the chapel door the image of a Hindu god cast its black reflection, like *Pulcinella* pulling snooks.

Craig did not see it. Craig would rather have died than have confessed to seeing it. Ommony kept his thought about it to himself, suppressing the unbidden smile lest Craig, who was disturbed by the dog's efforts to enter the chapel, should draw wrong conclusions.

One wrong conclusion was enough for that first morning, but how should Ommony upset it without offense? He was perfectly aware of Craig's intention to flatter him into a frame of mind useful to the mission. Had Ommony not turned the same trick scores of times, changing a race-conscious, self-assertive junior into some one who could love trees? You can learn more about human nature in a forest than in teeming cities, and Ommony knew Craig disbelieved his statement about his coming of his own free will. But how should he convince him? Was the effort worth it? What would be the consequence?

"You say the *diwan* is your friend?" Craig asked as they turned toward the house again.

He tried to make it sound as if he thought the assertion true; but men who have listened for a lifetime to the voices that come down-wind through forests are not easy to deceive as to hidden meanings. Ommony was sorry he had made the statement, but he nodded.

"That's excellent," said Craig.

It was all he did say on the subject just then. Men were trooping through the gate to gather Ommony's belongings and carry them to the royal guest-house. There was a pompous Hindu officer in charge, walking as if the mission gravel did dishonor to his boot-soles, bent on making much of Ommony and snubbing Craig. Ommony shook hands and introduced him, forcing him to be polite to Craig, gaining the Hindu's admiration for his own tact but missing what he intended. Craig drew him aside.

"I appreciate your motive, but kindly don't force me to shake hands with that man again. He's one of my most malignant enemies. He'll brag now all over town that——"

Ommony cut him short by turning to say good-by to Elsa. She emerged from the veranda smiling so serenely that for a moment Ommony was almost fooled. Only the undisguisable acid in her voice rewarned him.

"Come again—come often, Mr. Ommony. When you yearn to be understood, and for home comforts, and to hear your own language, you'll know where to find us."

So she thought she understood him! ——! Ommony set his teeth as he rode the maharaja's fat horse, sent for his discomfort and greater honor. He would rather be understood by the devil than by Mrs. Craig just yet! He suspected possibilities, but they were latent. Her own incomprehension, it seemed likely to him, would be the only safeguard for any one who came within her reach—that, and perhaps the limitations of her too narrow orbit. She would dominate or die—use or usurp—control or conquer and then tread underfoot! She was dynamic mastery imprisoned! Good-looking as the deuce!

"So *she* started the ball, eh? *I* thought the *diwan* was telling the whole truth in his letter! Men—women? Give me animals and trees! We men are all fools!"

He rode through streets whose history was fading in the days when Rome first built a fort beside the Thames and called the fever-stricken mound Londinium—past buildings where a lore lies hidden that is foolishness to modern wisemen, but compared to which their most amazing calculations would be as journalese to Sappho—past pagodas never penetrated by the profane, not even by all-conquering warriors,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

who might else have destroyed what they could not understand; alongside waterways where ships they say were Solomon's once lay at anchor, loading gold, apes, peacocks and the rest of the trash he prized; through awninged marts where modern mock enamelware displayed itself indecently beside the craftsmanship of self-respecting days; into the realm of elephants, where big, stake-hobbled brutes ceased dusting to salute at the command of a *mahout;* and beyond them to a triangle between three roads on which was set the guest-house, hidden by flowering trees and hedged in by a living fence of clipped bamboo.

It was a place quite fit for an emperor, if an emperor had brains enough to know it.

There, beneath the stone gate-arch on which the gods were carved in pictographs, whose inner meaning only a rare few still preserve, the *diwan* waited, white from head to foot—turban, hair, beard, clothing, shoes—his bronze skin looking handsomer in contrast, and his smile as gentle and as humorous as that of the too naked god who posed in stone overhead.

"My friend, my friend," he said in English as Ommony dismounted, "I can not say how you are welcome."

"You needn't."

"No, I think you know."

THEY entered the garden on foot together, the old *diwan* accepting Ommony's arm to lean on and the serving-men absorbing reverence for future use—that being India's ancient way; it has nothing to do with petty larceny and perquisites, that flourish equally and side by side with it; they are the weeds in India's Eden, encouraged, as her flowers are neglected nowadays.

They called each other *sahib;* for how else should five-and-forty years address five-and-seventy, or five-and-seventy answer a member of the conquering race? And, as was right, Ommony asked first the conventional questions concerning the maharaja's health. He learned that in his Highness' condition there was "no change."

Conventions all observed, they sat and were unconventional—as much as India *can* be—on the deep veranda of the guest-house in among *sar* and teak trees, sipping weak tea for politeness' sake, and for the sake of privacy selecting the corner that gave them full view of two sides of the house and the garden. They were seen by a hundred observing eyes, but could not be overheard, even by the Christian gardener employed there to flatter Craig.

"He is what he himself would call 'the limit,' that Mr. Craig," said the *diwan.* "He insults me daily without knowing it. In intention he is merely galvanic; he would like to charge new life into us as they charge the battery of his Highness' motor-boat. In effect, however, he is paralyzing!"

"As bad as that, Kalambi sahib?"

"Worse! I have spared you the infliction of the truth! You have seen his wife? She, who rules him, sought to govern me through my wife. She wrote, inviting herself to visit my wife 'in the seclusion of the zenana,' as she expressed it. I replied that the seclusion was too genuine at this time to be broken without unpredictable consequences. She answered accusing me of hypocrisy and marital tyranny—also of opening my wife's letters, which she claimed was illegal. But when I explained that my wife has been dead for more than twenty years she did not apologize."

Ommony sat back in the long chair facing the *diwan* and chuckled silently.

"Her sort don't," he answered. "What *did* she do?"

"I don't know, *sahib.* But I received a call from the British resident, who said he had been requested by the Secretary of State to suggest that I might with propriety use less prejudice in my relations with the wives of missionaries!"

"Good ——!" Ommony exploded.

"There was a garden-party at the mission soon afterward, so I attended it to prove how little prejudice I have. And they were very kind; they let bygones be bygones; they made it obvious they had forgiven me. They gave me cakes I did not dare to eat, and much advice I would not take if death were to be the consequence of rejecting it. To avoid argument I asked to be shown the garden; and I talked to them a little of the knowledge of trees that I garnered years ago from you in your forest. I wish I had torn my tongue out rather!"

"Why?"

"Because I gave that woman an idea, and it would have been safer to give dynamite and fuses to some of the converts she and her husband keep about the place! They learned—I regret to say from me—

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

that some of the Hindu temple revenues are raised by a tax on tree-felling—a tax imposed centuries ago to conserve the forests; paradoxically it has wasted them.

"Craig and his wife seized at once on that chance to wage war on our Hindu hierarchy. That very evening Craig came and promised me a knighthood as if he had the dispensing of the King of England's favors. He did not know that I have refused a knighthood from every viceroy since Dufferin."

"Didn't you hit back?" Ommony asked.

"I did. I lent them an elephant. I said —which was true—that the royal and ancient way of showing the maharaja's favor is to do that. The chief *mahout*, of course, enlarged on the details of an elephant's rations. Contractors in receipt of hints delivered quantities of hay and grain together with their bills.

"Craig had to call on me and ask my influence in getting the loan of the elephant withdrawn with as little offense to his Highness as possible. I did so on condition that he should likewise grant me peace. He promised. He is honest. But he could not keep a promise he did not understand."

"How long did he let you alone?" wondred Ommony.

"Until next morning. He came then, alleging gratitude in that I had withdrawn the elephant, and offering in return to help me with all his influence in the matter of the forestry! He showed me a telegram he had received—of which I could have shown him the copy that I received before his reached him!—saying his friends had already taken the matter up in Simla.

"He had the impudence to say that a knighthood was hanging from ungrown trees for me to pluck, and that all I had to do was to grow the trees and take it. He considered that a pleasantry, I know, because he laughed at it. He added that since his Highness had felt friendly enough to lend an elephant, he ought to be easy to convince. He even offered to go to his Highness with me and give me the benefit of his eloquence."

He paused to let Ommony finish laughing. He would have preferred that he should not laugh, but he understood that the West can do that and be sympathetic. The East does not mix emotions.

"AT WHAT point did I come in?" asked Ommony at last.

"When Craig had written anonymously to the papers demanding a commission to investigate the decimation of our trees. He persuaded friends of his to do the same. There began to be editorials about it.

"You must understand—no doubt you do—that the priests headed by Parumpadpa were hard after me all this while. They resented less the attempt to cut their revenues than the scarcely veiled attack on their authority, and they threatened me with expulsion from office unless I could drive forth this missionary out of our coasts.

"The threat to me was comparatively easy of fulfilment. It was impossible to drive out Craig. I believe that I am useful to the State and that my resignation would be detrimental. I can guess who would be appointed in my place, and what advantage those priests would take of him. So what could I do but temporize?"

Ommony nodded. He could have finished the tale himself, but the *diwan* continued:

"I at last persuaded Parumpadpa and his priests that one course remained, and that I alone could take it. If you, with whom I boasted I have influence, could be persuaded to come here and inaugurate the forestry régime, then we should have a man with us whose breadth of experience and tolerance might solve the problem without disaster. Otherwise——"

He paused, preferring that Ommony should imagine alternatives; but Ommony fell back on rule of seniority and manners, and the *diwan* had to finish his own sentence:

"Otherwise, there will be bloodshed—murder—poison—and perhaps religious war. Our Hindus are indignant that Moplahs should have slaughtered their co-religionists a day or two's march away. They are still more indignant at having been prevented by the British from retaliating. It would be too easy to arouse them beyond control. Then the consequences——"

"Would be on the knees of influences known as gods, who are less controllable than we are," Ommony conceded gravely. "Well?"

"The simplest course," said the *diwan*, "would be to kill Craig. A missionary sent in place of him might prefer fish to forestry.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

And as to indemnity, the temple funds would care for that. The maharaja would apologize beautifully. There are even Christians in the mission who might be trusted to do the murdering, although they are not very trustworthy.

"But the difficulty there is that I dislike bloodshed from conviction—from within—outward—wholly. I believe I have sufficient influence remaining to prevent it.

"And it would be impossible to foresee any except the immediate consequences. So we must save Craig's life, although I think he is as much a menace as that other idiot who fired the shot at Sarajevo."

Ommony felt like a cat in the sun. Not one non-Aryan in a hundred million ever listened to the unmasked thoughts of the real ruler of an ancient Indian State. The key to their thoughts can not be won by force or influence, nor by any other means than friendship. He nodded, unlike Craig, for instance, who would have launched forth an unnecessary diatribe on murder.

"You mustn't expect me to side with you against Craig," he answered guardedly.

"If I had wanted—ah—the sort of man who would do that, I would not have asked the Woods and Forests to lend you for a while," said the *diwan* dryly. "A second course, that has been suggested to me would be to have Parumpadpa murdered. A skilfully conducted preliminary secret propaganda might produce anarchy within the hierarchy in that event.

"In fact, the suggestion was made to me indirectly by an individual who would welcome my assistance in snatching for himself the office of chief priest—although what his friendship would be worth *afterward* I don't know. But there again we can not foresee the indirect consequences. We might cry for Parumpadpa back again. The people would.

"It is true that Parumpadpa is no altruist. But he has no brains. And in his place there might be inflicted on us a priest *with* brains, than which there is no worse calamity."

A green cloud of parrokeets flashed screaming between them and the sun, as if Nature herself felt forced to comment on that instructive saying. A great tame stork by a fountain untucked his other foot, stood to attention, nodded solemnly and went to sleep again. Diana, down below the veranda, raised her head from between enormous paws and growled.

"Suggestion three?" asked Ommony.

"Was made by the priests. It was that every alien forester sent here should be beaten to death by a mob. You understand, it would be very easy to arouse the mob on religious grounds. And if a Hindu were to be sent he could be killed with even less difficulty; there would be scores of ways of getting him into trouble. That was another reason why I begged for you to be sent here; it occurred to me you would be much more difficult to kill."

Ommony lighted his pipe. He had to do something to disguise his reaction to that compliment.

"What do you consider the solution?" he asked.

"You, my friend, are the solution. You have been invited here to that end. Whatever may be the limiting terms of your official instructions, privately you have *carte blanche* from me. You are to accomplish the incredible, as I have seen you do before.

"In the name of Craig and his accomplices—who came here uninvited—it has been ruled that we may cut down no more trees. People who are so poor that one piece is a consideration have been ordered not to pay the infinitely tiny wood-tax. They may purchase fuel instead at seven times the former price from neighboring unrestricted States. And we are to plant trees, although where has not been specified. There are no public lands available unless we take away the grazing-grounds——"

Ommony interrupted him with a gesture of impatience—the rebellion of an open mind that recognized no real impossibilities, against prejudgment.

"An old story, Kalambi *sahib*. There are always fifty reasons for cutting trees, a hundred more for not replanting them—and politics. That's worst."

"Worse than religion?"

"Tell me about Parumpadpa."

"The temple chests are overflowing. Therefore he thinks more of power than of money just at present."

"Yet you say he has no brains?"

"None whatever, *sahib*. He is the perfect embodiment of abstract sanctity without a concrete reason. He presides over his church as our maharaja presides over his Government; only to the Church there are no restrictions. Consequently the priests can make Parumpadpa do anything, whereas

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

I can only advise my maharaja to act constitutionally."

"What is Parumpadpa's weakness?" Ommony demanded.

"Vanity! That is why he heads the Church so ably. His subordinates flatter him, and he obeys."

"What's his strength?"

"The fact that there has been no war in this State for many generations. The people are not afraid of the threat of it. They do not know what it means. They would be very easy to excite and very difficult to subdue. They believe that Parumpadpa is their friend against these foreigners who increase the cost of fuel. Moreover, the priests stand well with his Highness, who is deeply devout and who is respected by the people because of his devotion."

"Then why didn't you advise him to answer the Secretary of State that he should mind his own business? Why not refuse pointblank to interfere with forestry conditions?"

"My friend, because at the time when this man Craig began his assault on our peace there was a question of fishing-rights at issue between the British *raj* and ourselves—highly important from the point of view of our improvident people; unimportant to the British, except as a tactical advantage. They conceded fish and demanded forestry."

Ommony knocked out his pipe and chuckled.

"Craig's a real calamity, eh? He *has* brains."

"He or some one with him," said the *diwan* darkly. "But he has no heart," he added, "and the heart, my friend, can conquer cleverness."

CHAPTER III

"Hail Parumpadpa!"

PARUMPADPA and his priests played the opening gambit, urged by circumstances out of their control.

The waiting game is best when your resources are an unknown quantity to your opponent. Leave initiative to him; block him without disclosing your own hand, forever riding on his shoulders, as it were, and tiring him more fatally the more he struggles. The East, and peculiarly India, understands that method.

But it was conceded in priestly councils—not held in crypts in which the Yogi brood over old mysteries, but in a temple back room like a vestry—that Ommony's arrival on the scene had forced their hand.

For instance, there were rumors, spreading swiftly on excitement's wings that on the bows of Ommony's boat a golden god had stood, shaped like nothing ever known in Indian cosmogony. Some said his skin was tongues of flame, and others that his voice was like far-away thunder.

The boatmen—having held a consultation, too, where a Frenchman sold forbidden beverage—were suspected of collaboration in another rumor that whomever the new god touched was blessed and could pass along the blessing. The boatmen had all had contact, and were charging a rupee a person to be touched in turn; which was bad enough.

But worse was that it all redounded to Ommony's credit. They would make a god of him next, with leave to plant or cut trees anywhere!

"We must do something," said Parumpadpa oracularly, having ascertained that his technical subordinates were of that opinion.

He was a very learned-looking man, whose long robes, long beard, long gray hair descending to his shoulders, and long ascetic nose would have gained respect for him in any decent society, provided he kept still. The *diwan's* judgment of him notwithstanding, he had brains enough to appreciate his own stupidity. None could ever accuse him of responsibility for failure, or refuse him credit for success, because with priests, just as with other folk, the strongest faction wins, and he led deftly from the rear.

So Parumpadpa's, "We must do something" amounted in effect to a question, "What shall we do?"

There followed hours of to-and-fro discussion, in which all theories had an airing, including those of murder; but none was found acceptable because Parumpadpa could not detect as much as a nucleus around which a faction might form with encouragement. The spy who told the *diwan* of it afterward said there seemed to be as many plans as priests.

But at last a man stood up, whose name was Jannath. It was he who had suggested to the *diwan* that Parumpadpa might be murdered, profitably to himself and perhaps, too, to the *diwan*. Jannath, pouring sarcasm from bitter lips, offered a plan that

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

should break Craig's heart if nothing else, and volunteered to execute it.

That suited Parumpadpa, who detected sufficient jealousy of Jannath to make it quite safe to entrust him with the opening act of war. The first move is always the butt of condemnation. Even if it succeeds beyond all expectation jealousy is sure to find fault with it.

And Parumpadpa was aware of Jannath's overtures to the *diwan*. The *diwan* had told him, to make politics more pleasant for all concerned.

"Let us hear Jannath's great plan," he commanded with sufficient sneer to establish later on if necessary his own claim to have disapproved it in advance.

Jannath, on his mettle, spoke of elephants and of the Feast of the *Mahouts*, to occur within the week. He spoke so eloquently that he convinced them. Parumpadpa sensed a big majority in favor.

"Jannath shall try his plan," said Parumpadpa. "Let the chief *mahout* be sent to me."

The chief *mahout*, an illiterate, almost casteless, wholly superstitious member of the useful underworld, would have been sufficiently enraptured to be interviewed by the high priest's subordinate. But Jannath was only given permission to be present at the interview for the purpose of bearing subsequent blame; and between them he and Parumpadpa reduced the chief *mahout* to a state of doddering acquiescence, in which he would have been willing to eat hot coals if so commanded; for never before in the history of that State had a chief *mahout* been granted an interview by the chief priest. He was the most blessed *mahout* in history. Thenceforward any one who should seek his favor would have to pay double the former price. He went forth wondering, owned soul and body by the hierarchy, and beat his wife to assist her understanding.

Jannath had shown genius, for elephants are the most uncertain of all beasts, and none can predict what they will or will not do, except their *mahouts* on occasion. When, as at the Feast of the *Mahouts*, you have nearly a thousand elephants in procession through crowded, narrow streets, on their way to be blessed at a temple, and winding thence afterward in ever increasing circuits until the whole city shall have seen their flower-draped hugeness, the chance for trouble could hardly be improved. A cracker will start elephants stampeding. A small dog's bark, a drum with unaccustomed note, a shadow on a wall that should not be there, will madden them beyond control.

Mahouts may not be blamed for the custom, as old as the throne itself, of conferring on strangers the privilege of riding the royal elephants on the day of the feast. *Mahouts* are untouchables, who might grow heady if allowed a feast unto themselves; so in the beginning honored strangers were imposed on them—at the strangers' risk—for the same reason that the maharaja always stayed away. They were the skeletons at the feast. The maharaja's absence was the false note inserted to act as a sedative.

On this occasion the only suitable skeletons available were the British resident and Ommony. The resident had toothache, or said so, and in place of himself sent his helmet and a case of "presentation" whisky to the chief *mahout*, who accordingly was drunk before the gambit opened, as Ommony was first to learn—unless you count the elephant; they miss nothing.

The *mahout*, rebuked suitably, insisted it was Ommony who was drunk, that being a *sahib's* right condition; he further asserted that the elephant was father of typhoons, progenitor of earthquakes, causer of calamities——

Wherefore would the *sahib* please be seated?

Ommony took his place in the *howdah* with misgiving, and as an afterthought whistled Diana, thinking the great hound would be safer up there than in the street and less likely to cause trouble. The *mahout* drank copiously from a bottle draped in cotton cloth and, remarking that doubtless all was well beyond the stars, whacked the elephant's skull with the butt end of the ankus. That elephant's name was Tippoo Sahib, and he has made a heap of history more than once. He arose and wandered forth, a little too moist at the trunk end, as if he too had been imbibing the forbidden drink.

And animals no less than men ask only to be led. The hundred monsters in the palace grounds were used to following Tippoo Sahib, just as their *mahouts* were used to following their chief without much argument. So, though the time was not yet and the orchestra that should have played weird music had hardly set its

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ancient instruments in place, the rank and file of the mahouts, all self-conscious in their clean white clouts and turbans, allowed their charges to wheel into column two abreast and shuffle in Tippoo's wake.

Several people shouted, and a native officer galloped up in an effort to head the procession off. But the chief *mahout*, like an avalanche once under way, was capable of anything but turning back. Down came the heavy ankus drum-fashion. Tippoo Sahib, blowing the Rogues' Riot Call through a slobbery trunk, went forward through the orchestra, destroying two drums *en route*.

Priests' instructions were aflame in the *mahout's* mind. They might have burned themselves to ashes there had one of those two drums not circled Tippoo's forefoot like a napkin-ring. It irritated him beyond endurance. Stamp how he would, the loose, annoying ring would not drop off. In some way he connected it with the ankus blows that rained on him, and irritation burgeoned into wrath. The great brute trumpeted again, and this time most of the royal herd answered him.

"Set me down!" said Ommony.

BUT it was too late, and he knew it. One of those events had had its birth that like a dynamite explosion must increase. They will not go back into the shell. Their only end is in development, which a man may guide but not prevent, and he who gets in the way of them is nothing.

There was a high wall shutting in the courtyard surrounding the palace, and a great arched gate, through which six elephants might march abreast. Tippoo went straight for the gate at a speed not lessened in the least by Diana's barking, and the whole herd quickened into a mob behind, not knowing and not caring why but simply following and in a hurry to catch up.

And even so there might have been no disaster, for a drunken *mahout's* and an elephant's thoughts are *x*, the unknown quantity. But outside the gate there were nearly nine hundred more thick-skinned anachronisms, each with a feast-keeping man on his neck, all drawn up ready for entertainment and decked in sufficient finery to grace even that occasion. There were torn draperies and broken chains; elephants were plucking at each other's trappings and their own; *mahouts* were becoming angry. There was nearly enough friction to start a fire before ever Tippoo came trumpeting through the gate, making men's skin creep and terrifying every animal within a mile.

But a hundred more rioted in Tippoo's wake. The gate grew chock-a-block with struggling brutes, and even great blocks of masonry were shifted by the thrust against them. The panic spread like fire.

Ommony watched it helpless, clinging to Diana, who seemed to believe that by barking and jumping she might accomplish something.

The chief street of the city lay ahead like a bow-string taut between point and point of the curving water-front, and all the countryside in gala dress was packed between the shop-fronts, leaving hardly a lane for sober elephants—none whatever for emergency. Tippoo went down that cramped opening full speed ahead, and a thousand monsters raced for first place in pursuit. At one point there were ten of them neck and neck, and the crowd had nowhere to turn to escape them.

The unknown quantity of reason in the chief *mahout's* mind, inflamed by the presentation whisky, worked like an engine with the governor released. Turning once, he saw the helpless mob of men and women go down under the pellmell avalanche of brutes. He heard Ommony's pistol; for the one lean chance was to kill an elephant or two and scare the others to wheel and retreat. But who, from a *howdah* on the back of a screeching, living earthquake, can hit the eyes of elephants in panic, with a .38 automatic? Ommony hit one, and did well. He might as well have shot to stop the monsoon.

Ommony had done his utmost, and had no more cartridges. But if the *sahib* was disturbed enough to shoot, why then should a reasoning *mahout*, the confidant of chief priests and the instructor of royal elephants, not show his capacity under emotion?

"Ganesha!* Hah!"

What enemy hath done this thing? Who but a Christian missionary—Craig—could have—would have—would have dared to spoil the Feast of the *Mahouts*, that had been a famous feast each year since the gods themselves last walked on earth with men? Great—oh, great and wise—were the priests who had warned him in advance that

* The elephant-god.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the elephant folk might know enough to trample Craig underfoot this day!

Whack! came down the heavy ankus on Tippoo Sahib's skull. Where was it?—that mission garden, where the priests had warned him Craig was growing trees by means of which to impose his hated creed on a folk whose gods were plenty good enough, and kind, and not too critical!

Lo and behold, the garden of the mission! Lo, the foreign-looking trees mocking their betters over the top of the garden wall! Lo, the gate! An arched gate! Too narrow and too low to pass an elephant!

"Ha! Ganesha!"

Whack! came down the ankus once again on the brute's sore skull. Hook, knees, imprecations labored to change direction, even as the old gun-laying crews would work in the days of sail. Tippoo Sahib hove his rump and a restless tail to windward; and Ommony, grabbing Diana by the scruff with one hand, seized the tail and jumped! Diana's weight alone was enough to have destroyed his chance, but his hold on the short tail offset that, and when he let go and fell it was the hound's elastic strength that saved him. He was up, and off, and away out of the path of the pursuing herd at the same instant that Tippoo Sahib's forehead struck the wall above the narrow gate and toppled down a section wide enough to admit six elephants abreast.

Thereafter there was damage done, and Ommony beheld the whole of it from the roof of Craig's house, sitting between Craig and his wife, with the servants and the converts in a crowd behind them and Diana baying her disapproval to the skies.

For he and the dog had burst into the mission just in time to rescue the Craigs and round up the whole outfit out of harm's way. Only "John Ishmittee" with his broken leg in the little screened out-house was left, like Lot's wife. Elsa called to him, but he stayed to gather up absurd belongings, and from the roof they saw the splintering out-house disappear under a blue-gray wave of wrath.

The garden wall went down in sections like a dyke when the sea gets through the weakest part. Three thousand tons—a thousand head—the elephants poured in and milled, a blue-gray maelstrom, screaming as they cut their feet on things Craig had imported, and reducing just that piece of earth and all things on it to the state of a parade-ground—flat.

It grew into a sort of tune. The big blue shoulders rose and fell in unison as they worked like washerwomen at the tub, their fool *mahouts* nodding to one another, each forever saying the same thing and all as helpless as the wrack that rides on waves.

"They have seen the Lord Ganesha. He has ordered it. He verily has ordered it."

Who had, or had not ordered it made small difference to the Craigs just then. The elephants had broken in through the veranda screen, and the whole lower floor was a part with the garden—a desert—a flat waste, much marked with trampled things whose part and purpose were no more discernible. They heard the tear and twang of the grand-piano strings as one big brute drove a tusk in under them and ripped the lot to ——. The crash of glass and crockery was like the splash of spray.

"I'm glad I built the walls well," Craig said solemnly.

No more than that one reminder of all that married life with Craig had been was needed to destroy the fence that Elsa had painstakingly erected around herself. It went down like the garden wall. He cared for nothing but the concrete wall that still stood under him! Her feelings, her emotions, her regrets, even her sympathy, escaped him altogether!

He was glad, doubtless, that her body and the servants' and the converts' bodies were up there with life in them beside him on the roof; but the only thing that aroused his emotion to the point of speech was walls which stood!

"I hate you!" she said simply.

For a moment he thought she meant Ommony. That she should hate himself was so incredible that the thought failed to penetrate his understanding until her blazing dark eyes, looking straight at him, drove truth home.

"Elsa, are you sane?" he asked. "In front of a stranger— Elsa, I'm surprized!"

He might have used vitriol and have hurt her less. In front of a stranger! There was the whole point. That stranger understood her—knew—had known almost in the instant when they first met—that her married life and her mission field were dry bones draped. And in presence of the first man who had vision who had come into their lives, in the moment of heaped ruin when

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

almost any excess of sentiment would have been excusable, he forgot her ten years' labor side by side with him, her courage and encouragement, her guidance, her restraint, even her money flung into the fight with his—and praised his masonry that stood!

Not only that; he had not even the human charity to lie, as she herself had lied for ten lean years, and pretend that he held her dearer than bricks and mortar!

"Smash!" she said bitterly between set teeth, leaning over to watch the elephants. "Go on! Smash it all! I'm glad! I'm glad!"

"Elsa!"

Craig was scandalized; afraid, too, that perhaps he had an unhinged woman on his hands. Ommony turned away and walked to the far side of the roof, holding Diana by the scruff lest she jump into the maelstrom beneath and perish underfoot. As surely as the dog saw outrage to be opposed with teeth and noise he, Ommony, sensed a greater climax; and he knew that only silence and a view as wide and wakeful as the sun's at dawn would be the least use.

"All the king's horses and all the king's men," he reflected; "yet—no king and his horses are the whole of it."

He began to pace the roof with hands behind him, followed by the dog, who only knew that where her laconic owner was, solutions of all problems usually grew as if of their own accord. There was now a great crowd running from the streets to view the spectacle, and its voice was half a laugh so blended with an angry undergrowl that not the cock-surest Christian would have mistaken it for friendly.

"It might be worse," Ommony reflected, looking down from a corner of the roof, first at elephants, then at men and veiled, shrill-voiced, excited women. "The crowd would have used fire. The brutes are merciful."

The mercurial Eastern mind had lost no seconds seizing on enlightenment. They understood below there that Craig and his household were suffering because the priests decreed it.

But some one had confirmed that. There were runners in among them whispering the news from ear to ear that Parumpadpa had begged the loan of the royal elephants for this purpose, and that the stamping-out of Craig and his Christians was the maharaja's doing.

"HAIL, motherland! Hail, Parumpadpa!"

The cry went up from one voice. A hundred echoed it. A thousand rolled it up into a roar that thundered down-wind all along the water-front and set the city's riffraff by the ears—that element that never stirs away from water save when the looting tempts. Ommony heard trumpets blaring in the royal barracks, and turned to watch the maharaja's cavalry emerge through palm-trees for riot duty.

But he did not see that. It was Elsa's eyes he met, she standing not a yard away with fists clenched—calm-appearing enough otherwise, except that the line of her lips was harder and her eyes were brighter than most women's are.

"I believe you did that!" she said with a jerk of her head downward toward the elephants.

Ommony was rather too wise to argue just then with any woman in such a mood.

"There goes a life's work—two lives' work!" she went on. "Who are you, and what have *you* done? What do you *amount* to, that you should see our ruin?"

He saw no reason to defend himself.

"You think, because you have planted trees, you are fit to take pity on us possibly?"

She ground her heel into the roof.

"*We* have planted God's word in the hearts of heathen! I believe you were jealous, and you ordered this!"

Still Ommony did not answer. After all, he *had* planted a few score million trees, and the trees had grown. He believed that on their plane, in their degree, the trees have souls and life and consciousness; also that men who work have no need to assert themselves.

"You're a coward!" said Elsa Craig, and turned away from him.

Her scorn provided him excuse for silence; not that he would have dreamed of denying her accusation. Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of cowardice. Those who were not cowards have been crucified, slain, tortured, burned, imprisoned, every one. Ommony was no exception, and the only difference was that, knowing himself a little, he was not annoyed by plain speaking.

He was a coward beyond doubt. He was afraid then. The elephant herd, and the mob that milled around them more vicious

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and less manly than the brutes, did not disturb him very much, for all they can do to a man is break or burn him and that, like the toothache, though it hurts, is presently over with. He would not have been afraid to go down among the elephants, provided anything might be gained by that. He feared nothing he could see.

But as he had once told an intimate, his own Achilles' heel was in the air. The trees had taught him. Only a long view lends itself to forestry, and Ommony could foresee consequences far beyond the scope of ordinary vision. Like the trees, imprisoned by the destiny of trees but free from haste, he knew of wolves and little foxes—serpents in the undergrowth and unseen fowl that roosted above the boughs—knew and could not prevent their goings and comings.

He could see the hand of Parumpadpa's priests in this affair as plainly as Belshazzar once saw writing on a wall. He knew it was war, not accident, although he was wrong in thinking the chief *mahout* had received his whisky from the priests.

Knowing the nature of that kind of war, he knew there would be no quarter. Noncombatants would suffer with the rest; in fact there are no noncombatants when Church and politics join issue for the right to rule, although the most imagine always they are on the fence, or above it all and out of it.

The priests would no doubt seek to destroy his, Ommony's, reputation. But that did not frighten him; that was not his Achilles' heel. Long, long ago, when he first laid all ambition on India's ancient altar and received in exchange for it the understanding that is only India's gift, he learned that reputation is delusion. It meant nothing to him who received men's credit for the work he had done. He had done the work, and that was all that mattered—except this: that he dared not fail.

Whatever his hand attempted he had finished. That was his reward for self-elimination. But even as Achilles, dipped in Lethe to be made invulnerable, had to be held to earthy weaknesses by one link, so Cottswold Ommony. He dreaded failure. He was afraid to fail. It appeared to him worse than sin—which is after all mainly ridiculous, like the fools who couch their lances at its specter.

As he saw life, the man who understands a little of the Law in force around him holds what he knows in trust. And since a thousand fall for one man's failure, the price in irremediable consequences—what the East calls *karma*—is too high to pay, yet must be paid inevitably.

So a man who thinks he knows himself a little—none may know more than that—should hesitate before he undertakes a task. Failure may whelm a million people, every quiver of whose agony must in the end be felt by him through whom affliction came.

It is a law with compensations. There is the corresponding side to it. Alternatively he who sows shall reap. But just then Ommony saw nothing but the shadow, knowing he had undertaken the immeasurable task of bringing surcease to an ignorant swarm, that lay beneath the hoofs of raging creeds as surely as the garden and the mission floor lay under the pads of elephants.

He wondered whether the trees he loved, in whose name he had come there, had taught him enough to know where to begin. At least he knew he would not attempt too much at a time.

And he could see Craig, gray with misery, back turned to his wife, staring down at the ruin and the blue gray brutes beneath him. Ommony went over to him.

"I don't pretend to understand or criticize the will of God," said Craig, "but who shall pay me for all this?"

It is difficult to comfort any one who figures accident in terms of income unless you can show him money. Ommony could neither do that nor answer his question.

Neither did he estimate the ruin as the will of God. It had not even his own approval. Craig or no Craig, Ommony knew the driving force behind the mission and the certainty that as long as the West has quarters for the offertory plate the East will not lack foreigners to assail her old philosophy—knew, too, that an out-and-out victory for Parumpadpa and his priests would be as pregnant with evil consequences as men's conquests always are. He smiled to think of Parumpadpa's innocence—an old rogue gaging the West's resistance in terms of elephants and whisky-primed *mahouts*.

"I suppose you're glad to see this work undone?" Craig asked bitterly, watching him.

Undone it was. The elephants that had not won into the compound but had had to satisfy themselves with overthrowing walls and making the surrounding huts and gardens into unsightly wilderness, were already

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

coming back under control and being herded sulkily up-street. Sharp cries of *mahouts* and ankus-blows now that there was no more harm to do were gradually mastering the rest.

What recently had been a blue-gray sea of heaving trunks and shoulders sprayed with white turbans of *mahouts* was breaking up into separate eddies that whirled and were borne away on another tide. In fours and fives and dozens they returned with an air of satisfied accomplishment to the great *maidan* outside the palace wall, where they began to line up as straight as white infantry on parade.

"I'm told this Feast of the *Mahouts* has never been a failure yet," said Craig. "They attribute it to their beastly god Ganesha. Well—the Lord moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform. At any rate they'll have to admit Ganesha fails them this time. There won't be any feast now, that's sure; nor any procession. I'm glad of it. Why do you laugh?"

Ommony was not laughing. Nothing but a corner of a smile escaped him, and he regretted that. He knew, though he saw no use in telling Craig, that there would be all the greater feast and all the more processioning.

What if the flowers and frills had been torn from a couple of hundred of the elephants? Was a Christian mission not obliterated? Had the Lord Ganesha not avenged himself by the feet and the knees of elephants? True, men, women and children—some said a hundred—had gone down beneath the brute's stampede, but that was a thing to be blamed on Christians afterward.

"You and your wife of course, will stay, with me in the maharaja's guest-house? You can't stay here," said Ommony.

Craig looked sharply at him, not so much surprized as critical of motives.

"Yes," he said after a moment's pause. "There's nowhere else to go. We must."

"Come when you're ready," said Ommony, and whistled his dog.

The elephants were not all gone yet, but he preferred the flattened garden even so.

CHAPTER IV

"My name is Craig!"

THERE is a fiction, more useful than a superficial view pretends, that royalty should be advised of events before any decision is taken. It gives the world breathing-space. It lends dignity and poise to what would else be nothing but a scramble—mad, mean, hysterical.

"My friend," said the old *diwan* from the armchair facing Ommony on the veranda where none might see him but the stork and the Christian gardener, and only Ommony could hear the quiet voice, "if you could only come with me!"

"Why not?" asked Ommony.

"Because, my friend, you shot dead one and badly wounded five of the royal elephants. Parumpadpa's audience must wait until after mine, but he has already sent private word to the maharaja. The priests' version is that your pistol-shooting caused the stampede; therefore that you are alone responsible for the death of seventy people, and for the damage to the mission."

"That's just why I should go with you," Ommony answered.

"No. The priests would accuse you in his Highness' presence. You know how he is. He would only listen to the priests. Whatever you might say would fall before him dead like leaves blown against a fence. *They* have his ear."

"Take me with you," Ommony insisted. "I'm evidence—saw it all—give him a first-hand account——"

"He has had too many accounts," the *diwan* answered. "The priests were ready with their version of it all before it happened. You must turn the tables on the priests. You can not do that by simply telling a story different from theirs."

Ommony stood up and knocked the ashes from his pipe. He laughed a little dryly.

"All right."

The *diwan* rose too.

"Remember!" he said. "I sent for you to work a miracle."

Ommony chuckled again. He had not a notion what to say to the maharaja—only a second-hand version of what the priests' messengers probably had said to him—that and the *diwan's* assurance that the immediate outlook was the worst imaginable.

But he had the long view, backward as well as forward. It was his experience that, given will to do the right thing, Nature—Law—the Universe all *must* combine to put the answer in a man's mouth, to set the stage for him—if necessary to produce new agencies. All nature abhors a vacuum. A need, of thought or things, is proof in advance of its supply.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

But he did not say that to the *diwan*, because the merely religious and the merely shrewd grow frightened at prospect of reliance on the Unseen. It was wiser to look clever and pretend to having spare tricks up his sleeve.

So they went to the *diwan's* waiting carriage and drove for a mile down an ancient avenue whose trees had seen a hundred maharajas of one lineage come and go —then swiftly through that palace gate that only a *diwan* uses, and along between the sentries, armed with Snyder rifles lest '57 repeat itself.

The priests would use another gate and another door; but a man stood on the steps who was trained in the ways of priests, and he whispered to the *diwan* as the old man ascended the palace steps leaning on Ommony's arm.

"There is bad news," the *diwan* said to Ommony.

But Ommony had been hearing bad news all his active days. His business in life had been withstanding it. Fire, flood and famine all concern the man who rules a forest, and all of those are less destructive and less fearful than the rumor they send ahead of them.

"Never mind it," he said curtly. "Let's go-see and judge for ourselves."

"I must warn you," the *diwan* answered.

It was no use Ommony protesting. He would rather not have known the details. All those things are only snares to hinder a man and spoil his aim and judgment. Look—see—act on intuition; that is the secret of resourcefulness. But the *diwan* had grown white-haired in the other school, that pits its wits against the enemy and plans in advance of the event.

"They have charged that you brought this on deliberately, *sahib*. They have said your purpose is to bring all of us into difficulty with the British by causing it to seem that we hate missionaries. His Highness believes the tale. They have shown him the bullets you shot at the elephants, and a bottle that once held whisky, which they say the chief *mahout* declares he had from you!"

"I'll tell him wilder news than that, if that's his mood! Lead on," said Ommony.

The *diwan* drew assurance from the boast. Not once, ten times, he had seen this man in other days take victory out of utter ruin as a conjuror takes rabbits from a hat. He understood that Ommony had learned a theory from India more faithfully than Indians do. As for practise of it, were the woods and ways not noisy with the tales of this and that amazing feat he had performed? Some even called him a *mahatma*.

But the faces of attendants on the palace stairs were eloquent. Ill news, a-weaving ill fame, had assailed *diwan* as well as Ommony. Smiles that should have greeted both were not forthcoming—rather sullenness and nothing said, along with the sidewise glance from eye to eye alert to improve upon another menial's impudence. Easier than read the wind by weather-vane you can guess your momentary rating at the court of any Eastern king from the demeanor of the flunkies.

THE comfort within was absolute. In place of the whirring electric fans that make modern interiors sound and look like the 'tween-decks of a battleship the old embroidered punkahs moved with leisurely pause and swing that is as peace-conveying and restful as the ticking of old clocks. Carpets were laid three deep to silence footfall.

No new thing, new face, new custom was in evidence to disturb serenity. Colors were time-softened. Even the gold and vermillion on carved screens and the peacock-splendor of embroidery were tamed by the years until no stray tone of rawness broke the harmony. The bird by a stairhead in a lacquered cage whistled with a note as mellow as old wine.

Nevertheless there was an atmosphere of vague discomfort, because men's thoughts are stronger than the things they heap about them. Normally it was not a trying experience to wait in a teak, vermilion and gilt-lined throne-room until the heir of all the ages came and accepted homage. But the note of restfulness was lacking, and a noise suggestive of the penetrating anger of debate, muffled but not excluded by several doors, contributed to the sensation.

Ommony supposed it was the priests, awaiting their turn, entertaining courtiers with a sacerdotal concept of the crisis. But the strident voice and the protesting ones continued, even after the maharaja entered the throne-room through ivory doors. Noise at that solemn moment was

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

almost as contrary to precedent as Ommony's plain tweed shooting-jacket and the pipe, still hot, that nestled in his fist.

As the *diwan* had told Ommony the day he came, in the maharaja's condition there was no change. He was as he had been for five-and-thirty years, and as he would be until he died—too inbred to be educated, too well cared for to be ill, too sure of the past to comprehend the present. He had learned and forgotten nothing.

His face looked like a cameo beneath the old-rose turban, and his hands were those they drew in Persian miniatures six centuries ago. Perhaps he weighed a hundred pounds, and he looked as fragile as old porcelain—not bored—not angry—but obedient to laws and whims and superstitions that were growing ancient when the West was in leading-strings.

He nodded after a suitable pause, when the two attendants had given him the royal sword and target, without which royalty in that State is incognito.

"You may speak," he said with lips that scarcely moved.

They were delicate—blue—sensitive—considerate of custom.

The *diwan* let go Ommony's arm and stood erect, no less aware of the advantage of years and stateliness than Ommony was of the virtue of plain dealing. Ever men have paraded their highest conceptions of manhood in all crises, and forever will. The *diwan* was about to weave of musical old words a cloak of dignity about his sturdy-standing, blunt, too honest friend and leave the argument to him. But all old beacons were adrift that day.

There was interruption—an intrusion, uninvited, unannounced, without the maharaja's leave—as good as blasphemy!

Three doors in swift succession were kicked, swung wide and slammed again. A babel of angry protests rose and died away as the enormity of what was happening outwondered speech.

The bronze doors, facing those of ivory that royalty used, burst open, and an angry man broke in, all white from head to foot, in an old white hat undoffed, his face as livid-white as gypsum from expressed emotion, with a stag-horn-handled riding-whip in one hand, as if he had come to chastise somebody.

"My name is Craig!"

He doffed the white hat slowly and stood waiting, as if the very announcement of his name should be enough to force all issues, even as his courage had set armed guards aside and his arrogance had brought him through forbidden doors.

Two deep folds of an arras came to life. Two men armed with simitars strode forward, one on Craig's either hand, and paused. At a nod from the maharaja there would have been blood and entrails on the waxed floor; but it may be he caught Cottswold Ommony's eye; his right hand, which had been closed a long while on the hilt of the sword of state, opened, and the two went back, not now behind the arras but on guard in front of it.

Craig understood that play perfectly, but knew nothing of the etiquette of courts and cared less. He spoke again without waiting for invitation.

"I'm here to demand immediate satisfaction!"

There is a famous admonition to Christians to offer the other cheek, and cheek has become a missionary's lawful weapon. Craig had his with him.

"I demand compensation in full—an apology—and reerection of my mission at the State's expense!" he announced, folding arms across his breast in the attitude of unyielding resolution.

If he had been a pagan defying fanatical invaders, or even a Christian told to swap religion or take the consequences, he might have challenged admiration. As it was he challenged anger.

The maharaja, lineal descendant from the moon, who knew small English and less bad manners, bit his lip. None had leave to speak yet. Even the *diwan's* leave had lapsed.

The maharaja held trumps. Little and inbred he might be—lord of a little kingdom and less revenue, with tug-o'-war on top of him between the British and the priests, and only a nine-gun salute whenever he crossed his borders—but he could outplay Craig.

He made a signal—just a gesture of eye and lip—to an attendant, who at once relieved him of royal sword and target. He was in another world that instant, as immune from approach or address as if invisible. And he rose and yawned and sauntered out as if the veil between himself and lookers-on were actual, not assumed.

"Well, I'll be——"

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"——?" suggested Ommony.

"— sugared!" Craig corrected.

The *diwan* sighed. He was helpless. Unless he should choose to concede to Parumpadpa and his priests a similar privilege, which they would doubtless multiply and never yield again, he did not dare presume to follow his Highness through the ivory double door.

Like the priests, he could send his unofficial messengers to whisper behind the scenes; but for the remainder of that day and all the next the maharaja would be within his constitutional rights in refusing to grant audience. It was only another of those devices anciently contrived for taking haste out of affairs of State.

But the men who thought it out had not reckoned with the coming Christian's other cheek, so Craig stood like the horse-thief who had shot the judge; there was none now to be appealed to against mob law. His enemies had two days' unobstructed grace.

"Remember! I said a miracle!" the *diwan* reminded Ommony, touching his arm again.

He would have ordered a chair except for the contingent obligation of offering one to Craig.

"Where's your wife?" asked Ommony suddenly, and Craig looked at him with gathering resentment.

He did not consider that he had come there to be questioned sharply by this forester, whom he suspected of being a pagan in league with pagans to oppose good mission-work. But he could not avoid an answer.

"She is superintending the pitching of a tent."

"To live in it?"

Craig nodded.

"Unsafe! I offered you and her accommodation in my quarters," Ommony answered, squeezing the *diwan's* arm a little more tightly than mere politeness called for, but watching Craig.

"She objects in the circumstances," Craig said, making no effort to disguise the iron in his voice.

He was a good, hard fighter, willing enough to come out in the open. But then so was Ommony; and Ommony knew better why he fought. He turned toward the *diwan*:

"I advise you to order this man's wife detained under suitable guard for her own protection," he said deliberately, and turned his head again in time to intercept a look on Craig's face that was almost comic.

It meant relief from tension. It was almost like a prisoner's being turned unaccountably out of doors.

The *diwan's* old eyes twinkled, but he shifted nervously. Few but such as he can estimate the danger of meeting sword with sword—the zeal of missionaries with the blunter means of law.

By law he might take law into his hands for two days at his own risk; for the maharaja might repudiate him afterward, that being another safeguard long ago devised to keep the throne in countenance. None but the British, and not even they until the resident should be informed, could countermand his orders.

There was a rumor that the resident was ill with abscess and had taken too much morphia to ease the pain. And for what had he sent for Ommony unless to be guided by him?

"That is my order," he said simply. "I will go and attend to it."

HE LEFT the palace attendants to get rid of Craig as they might see fit. His excuse for withdrawing Ommony was that old age needed a strong arm to lean on.

"Better take up quarters with me," said Ommony over his shoulder to Craig. "Come whenever you see fit."

He did not propose to give Craig excuse for accusing him of open enmity. Perfervid zealots with the lid of conjugal restraint removed are capable of wild leaps into the chaos of illusion. He preferred to use Craig's energy to foil the priests rather than let it burn up in uncomprehending rage against himself—if only for the sake of the trees, which were his life's business, even as Craig's was converting Hindus. Besides, he liked the man—admired his courage if nothing else.

So presently he and the *diwan* found themselves alone together where the carriage waited under the *porte-cochère*. They were seen, because those Indian palaces are pierced in the recesses of a thousand carvings with eye-holes for the omnipresent spy, but none could overhear them.

"Where will you put her?" asked Ommony.

"*Sahib*, I——"

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The *diwan* hesitated. Though he trusted Ommony he had the senior's dislike to lay bare mental processes, and to that was added Eastern unwillingness to be quite frank. Pride of the offensive sort was not in him, but he would have been a poltroon had he no respect for his almost absolute authority.

"I will consider."

"Do. Consider this: Defeat is to the irresolute; victory to the swift. If she appeals through the resident to Delhi, that will mean that the British must interfere. And *if* they must, they're at the mercy of organized religion as much as you are. Better defy Big Business than the Church!

"The thing to do is to earn her gratitude. The way to do that is to let her get into the toils. Then get her out again. The way to defeat Parumpadpa and his gang is to compromise them badly. Did you ever go fishing? You should give the fish lots of line always before you strike."

"Man of enigmas! Just now you warned me to be swift!"

"I did. Are your horses swift? Then let's go driving."

It was then, and not until then, that the *diwan* understood.

"Craig will return to his wife and warn her. Yes. But what if they go together to the resident?"

"My servant told me Craig went there first thing. The resident is in no condition to see any one or do anything. The residency doctor is away. The only immediate danger is that the resident may have wired for some one to replace him."

"He has not," said the *diwan*, who had his own arrangements for knowing what telegrams were sent.

"He doesn't want the morphia habit to become official knowledge, no doubt," Ommony answered.

"But *sahib*, what if they should send a telegram to Delhi? I dare not prevent that. There can be a little delay—an accident—a few hours——"

"Plenty!" said Ommony with confidence. "Listen, *diwan sahib:* I have your word for it that if Parumpadpa and his gang can find excuse to stir the mob against these missionaries there will be bloodshed—possibly a revolution."

The *diwan* nodded—shuddered.

"All India is on the verge of that," he answered.

"If Craig and his wife should win too handsomely that will be the priests' next move."

"Indubitably. See what they did! How swiftly the mob crowded to applaud the elephants! I have reported that was all due to an accident, but the priests are asserting it was due to you, and——"

"We must give them line—go fishing—driving rather! After you, sir."

He helped the *diwan* into the carriage, and in view of as many spies as cared to see they drove off, the *diwan* fidgeting nervously. But Ommony chuckled. He knew now he had won.

"You recall the peace conference in Paris?" he asked.

"I was there," said the *diwan*. "I was there and learned nothing new."

"Few did! But there were master-moves made. You recall how the Japanese stampeded the other representatives by packing up one night? They were only moving to another building, but the others jumped to the conclusion they were going home. There'll be jumping done here within thirty minutes!"

"God send you are right," said the *diwan*, "for I see only the jaws of war that open for us!"

"Let us drive as if we were very busy," Ommony advised him.

"It shall be as you say—for thirty minutes!"

"Your office first. The fact that we do nothing—say nothing—will make it hard for them to draw right conclusions—easy to make mistakes.

"Then a telegram in code about nothing to nobody! The babu will fail to understand it and either do nothing or else send gibberish along the wire. They may get a copy of the wire——"

"They will!"

"—and misinterpret it!"

So they drove by a roundabout route to the *diwan's* office. The *diwan* entered. Ommony remained outside. The *diwan* emerged again, looking serious, and a man who was sitting in the shadow of a doorway got up and hurried in the direction of a temple, where two priests peered under their hands out of gloom into the sunlight.

"You have five more minutes," said the *diwan*.

"To the residency then."

"We shall not be admitted."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Let us hope not."

"And after that?"

"It is their move. Then ours. And in the end there shall be more trees in your honor's domains than in all the four neighboring States together," said Ommony, leaning back on the expensive cushions and looking much less anxious than he actually felt.

CHAPTER V

"By Jiminy, we'll now grow trees!"

MOBS never rule. They always think they do, imagining they choose new leaders when the old are trampled underfoot. Cozened and flattered and betrayed, a mob does murder that the rogues who rule may profit, and it sets new feet of clay on its neck before its head can rise between one master and the next.

No man would choose Barabbas. No mob fails to prefer him. Men—individuals, that is—are stubborn thinkers, liable to err but each in his own advancing stage a battler for his highest view of right.

As teams they can accomplish. As a mob they become that fluid horror, gorging flattery as hogs eat swill, that senses no impulse other than self-righteous greed and is manipulated for their own ends by men more evil than the beasts because more intelligent.

An Eastern mob differs in nothing from the rest except in increased subtlety. Its motives are the same; its fears and lust and cruelty identical.

And as the sea is whipped into a rage by wind, or lulled into a temporary calm, so mobs are managed by the rogues who understand them and imagine that life is only a psalmist's threescore years and ten.

All history is a proof of that, and of the other fact, that one man with his eye fixed on eternity is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. There is a foretaste of eternity in planting trees.

The priests, and they who pandered to the priests, had lulled the mob's unrest as suddenly as the cries of children cease. That is done by promises, though not of loot, for they start action, but of something new about to happen. Expectation, veiled and vague, brings on a pause.

Ganesha had expressed his wrath by means of elephants. Now let them wait and see what next he had in store. Something marvelous was coming. There would be a miracle, let none doubt.

So Elsa Craig, unhindered, was ordering the pitching of a big tent in the ruined mission compound, and they who obeyed her were not Christians, for the converts had all decamped—as other converts once did in a famous hour. This and that man from the street had been called in, and was working for coin and curiosity. Some of them were priests' spies. All were aware they only hastened the undoing of the damned. Word had gone forth through the subtle avenues of Eastern news that the Craigs and all their root and branch were doomed. So there were threescore idlers doing ten's work, getting in one another's way and speaking to Elsa civilly.

Into that confusion Howard Craig came hot-foot, brushing sweat from his forehead with three fingers—a vulgarism Elsa hated.

"Girl," he almost shouted—and she hated to be called that—"you're to be arrested. Ommony advised the *diwan* in my hearing to put you under guard in some safe place until——"

Her anger checked him. Over his face there crossed the same look Ommony had noticed. Habits—loyal ones peculiarly—die hard, but again the thought occurred to him that worse than that might happen. Safe she then would be beyond all doubt; and he, without her to protect, without her to impose conditions on him, could accomplish more. He knew himself for no physical coward. He would dare——

"What did *you* say to that?" she demanded.

"Really, Elsa——"

"You agreed?"

"I did not. But I want you to agree. I think——"

It was scorn now. She could school herself to batten down her anger; but contempt, associating him with the proposal, was too strong for her and him. He could not argue against it.

Her unfairness struck the ground from under him. More than ever he was sure she would be better in a safe place in the *diwan's* custody; and she, too well able to read his thoughts, answered them instantly.

"Look!" she said, gesturing toward the throng who did her bidding, as much as to say the city would obey her if she were left to her own devices.

He swept the suggestion aside schoolmaster-fashion, irritably, with one hand.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Listen, Elsa!" he stammered. "I went to the residency. No admittance. Gould is sick or something. Couldn't get word to him, not even a note or a verbal message. So I went to the palace—shouldered past the guards—saw the maharaja——"

"*That* nonentity!"

"I demanded instant satisfaction, and he left the room! At least I have lodged my protest before witnesses. Ommony was there, and the *diwan*——"

"What business had Mr. Ommony?"

"Listen, Elsa! Ommony is quite right. He said——"

He stopped because she was not listening. She had that uningratiating gift of switching all attention suddenly from whoever was addressing her to something or some one else. Not only did she not intend to listen, she actually did not hear.

She had seen Diana, Ommony's great stag-hound, lawlessly at large and nosing curiously in among the trash the elephants had made—Diana, once commanded to make friends and good dog-fashion as sure of Ommony's discretion in such matters as she was unwilling to remain indoors.

"Please pitch the tent," she said suddenly, and without another word walked off to coax the dog.

CRAIG let her go, and stayed to do her bidding. He knew the uselessness of argument. In that mood she was capable of snubbing him for days on end, and the only remedy he had ever discovered was patient endurance, which, he consoled himself, was laid on him by his religion and his chosen path.

He hoped they would come and arrest her, never doubting they would treat her respectfully. The *diwan* was a gentle pagan, likelier to yield his own life rather than offer indignity to a woman or any foreigner. Craig hoped it might happen while his back was turned, for that would absolve him of a hand in it.

Once under arrest by order of the *diwan* she could not reasonably expect him to drag her back into danger. Expect it she probably would, but not reasonably. Reason would be on his side. It would uphold him afterward.

She had said, "Please pitch the tent." He went about pitching it methodically, with the intricate precision he had used in building up the mission, measuring the pegs so many feet apart and gradually getting order out of chaos with a quiet, determined way he had of setting the example. He never realized, nor could, that nine-tenths of the work was his while they who should have learned looked on.

And Elsa, stroking Diana's head, fingering the dog's ear as she had noticed Ommony did, picked her way disgustedly over the débris of the ruined wall into a deserted street, oblivious of direction and of every other thought except that life was all dry thorns in a weary wilderness.

She was the victim—she, who might have been the wife of a U. S. Senator! She thought she would have made a President of that man, if only he had not resented her efforts to guide him.

She had tried to make a famous man of Craig; she had forced her own broad thoughts into his narrow mold, accepting dogma that was all dry dust to her, and weary routine—all hypocrisy to her and balm to him—laboring with converts she knew well were unconverted, all to the end that Craig might be a great one in the world, and she his proprietor. And now this!

Ashes and agony and gray remorse! Craig didn't understand. He could not. He cared only for the sticks and straw of trampled buildings—that and her physical safety.

No doubt he would sooner or later gather his scattered converts back, when the casteless crowd they once disowned had forbidden them right of reversion to their old religion. He was capable of putting them to work and rebuilding, replanting, rewhitewashing—like an ant—no better than an ant. A one-track mind, she reflected bitterly, leading from nonentity to nothing else!

That kind of thought acts like the blinkers on a horse. She walked forward, seeing nothing but the ground before her feet, her right hand on the stag-hound's shoulder. Diana guided her. Diana's nose, forever ascertaining news by sniffing moistly at the tainted wind and reading smells as men read books, became aware of faint iodoform and followed the direction of it up a little lane between old trees—by a picket fence—through an open gate into a fenced enclosure where a few huts leaned untidily. There Diana's keen eyes recognized something familiar. She trotted forward, leaving Elsa standing; and Elsa

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

turned her head to look back down the lane.

She stepped into the shadow of the gateway instantly. She was just in time to avoid recognition by that self-same Hindu officer who had come to the mission that first morning to greet Ommony and superintend the removal of his luggage.

He was there on horseback with six troopers and a two-horse carriage—looking about him impatiently. Intuition argued he had come for her, and anger rose in a crimson wave to her temples.

He should look in vain! At least he should look in vain as long as possible! Determination to escape—to hide—perhaps to run away from Craig—was not quite definite; but she knew that officer's capacity for insolence, and one emotion was so heaped on another that reason hardly governed her.

A longing to hit back—to cause trouble and to give offense—surged in her. She stepped forward into the enclosure to annoy the officer, and she remembered that she might perhaps give Ommony some twinges of anxiety by keeping his beloved dog from running home to him.

The dog was sniffing at a pallet on which a man lay in the shade of palm-leaf eaves. Whether dead or only ill, that man provided her with excuse for trespass. If he should happen to be a high-caste man, who inevitably must repel any foreigner offering to touch him, she would none the less have done her duty in offering him aid; and it was very unlikely that a high-caste Hindu would be found in that place, or if so, that he would submit to attentions from a dog.

She hurried forward, feeling relieved to have something definite to occupy her mind, stooped over the pallet, and cried out with astonishment.

"You! John Ishmittee! You were supposed to be dead! How did you come here?"

Diana had completed her investigation. Having no more interest, she moved away and stood in the midst of the enclosure, looking for new attractions. John Ishmittee began a rambling account of his adventures, interspersed with a few words of kitchen-English, but it was obvious at the end of the first few sentences that either he was out of his head or all his information of the elephant-disaster was at second-hand. He was interrupted by Diana's battle-cry—no bark, but a growl like thunder in the hills—a noise that of dark nights made strangers' blood run cold; then instantly on top of it the worrying snap and snarl of action.

"Diana! Here! Here!"

But Diana was engaged. Eleven men—and Elsa knew them!—were attempting what not twice their number could have done without a net; to capture Ommony's white-fanged body-guard and drag her away into a hut.

Two men were down with blood gushing out of gashed wounds. A third was by the throat, and the rest were in one another's way, all struggling for a hold of tail or legs—boatmen all, none sober, and the lot the same men who had pulled the long sweeps of the maharaja's barge that had brought Ommony.

"Here! Diana! Good dog! Here!"

As well cry to the clouds far overhead! And another man was down, making mud from the flow of a torn artery. But Elsa had the courage of her sex and race, that is as cold iron in some sorts of emergency. Running with mission-pattern skirts uplifted, she waded in and, seizing the hound's collar, thrust her forearm into the blood-red jaws. The fangs closed on it like a vise and forced a scream from her; but even in that summit of brute rage the hound knew an official friend and let the arm go, snapping to right and left and straining at the collar to reach the enemy again.

Elsa felt her grip on the collar yielding. It would have been easier to hold a horse. She flung herself on her knees and took the dog's throat in her right hand, throttling and gasping orders:

"Down, Diana! Down, you hear me! Lie down!"

The hound obeyed, still growling like the rumble of a subway, and the drunken boatmen drew off in a semicircle, muttering their comments in a jargon not expounded in the missionaries' grammar-books.

Then down-lane there came the noise of trotting horses, clank of a saber on stirrup-iron and heavy carriage-wheels. Elsa turned her head with a gesture of nervous fear and cried aloud to the one sole creature there she had a claim on:

"John! John Ishmittee! Hide me somewhere! Those are the maharaja's men!"

John Ishmittee, raising himself on the pallet, said something in the boatman jargon. The men Diana had torn and bitten dragged themselves away. The other five grinned—beckoned—pointed to a door in

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the wall behind the end hut. They urged her to make haste. Elsa—no whit afraid of them—consented.

But she did not dare let the dog go. Diana would have run home. The maharaja's officer would see the dog and draw conclusions—guess that his quarry might be where the dog had come from. She gripped the collar with trembling fingers and dragged Diana with her.

The great hound came at first unwillingly. Then, throwing up her head, she uttered one long, penetrating howl, more desolate than a wolf's in Winter, and obeyed with no more protest.

Ommony, up on a tower, where he stood to watch that no indignity should go with the arrest, heard the howl, watched through a single pocket spy-glass, whistled to himself and gave instructions to the dog-boy, who was squatting on the tiles beside him.

"Trees!" he said to himself then; chuckling; "yes, by Jiminy, we'll now grow trees!"

CHAPTER VI

"The priests did this."

THE crises of the world, that take so long a-brewing, are mismanaged or disposed of in the course of minutes. Any fool could sense the danger after Sarajevo, or can tell, when a strike has been declared, that trouble and loss will come of it; but it is given to few to recognize the half-hour in which the tide of evil may be taken at the flood and turned, cross-currents and all, into constructive use. Those are mostly men without ambition, who become great doctors, lawyers, statesmen or, as in at any rate one instance, foresters.

Ommony came down the steps of an ancient tower, built for watching water-lanes when piracy was open and a gentleman's pursuit. His stride was positive—the thirty-inch, deliberate march of Rome's centurions who conquered by the strength of an idea.

He was afraid, and yet his fear was only lest his own ability should fall short of attainment. He had seen. He understood. Remained to hold the thread of the solution through inevitable darkness, and to follow it to the outcome. He forgot himself. The outcome was to be new forests and—the necessary way toward that—peace between factions.

The dog-boy had gone ahead, and he had trained him as a good commander trains his staff, or as the church trains zealots. So he could afford to pause in front of John Ishmittee and give that pawn of Destiny no inkling that a people's fate might possibly depend on him. He smiled and spoke leisurely, as if asking questions for his own amusement, providing no excuse for lies.

"Why, hello! How did you come here?"

"The *sahib* gave me money. I was tired of that bed in the mission. I paid the boatmen to bring me here."

"What have you to do with boatmen?"

"*Sahib*, I was of their religion once. And they have been saying that the *sahib's* big dog is a god in the form of an animal. The priests are angry with them, and the priests said there will be a punishment unless they seize the dog and drown him, where the carcass can never be found.

"So they came to me, knowing the *sahib* was friendly with the missionaries, asking me to assist them in the matter. And I paid them to carry me hither—hoping thus to do your honor a service by dissuading them," he added by way of establishing his own pellucid innocence.

"You are a snake in the grass and an ingrate," answered Ommony.

"Nay, *sahib!*"

Ommony's alert, observing eyes, that appeared to watch nothing but the convert's face, were at work conveying information to a brain absorbed by one objective. He detected cautious movement.

"You are a thief!"

"On my honor, *sahib*——"

"Let me look beneath that blanket! Quick now! Pull it back! No argument!"

It was a check-book, that only a fool would steal. He likely thought he could forge checks on Craig that a bank would cash. Ommony picked the book up, smudged a little ink on the inside of the cover with his fountain pen and passed it back.

"Put your thumb-prints there—both of them!"

He took the check-book back and pocketed it.

"Jail?" he asked. "You want to go to jail?"

"Nay, *sahib!*"

"Who came *this* way just now? Who went out *that* way?"

"Memsahib Craig."

"Did she wish to be seen?"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Nay, not to be seen. She begged me to hide her. The boatmen——"

"Silence then for silence!" Ommony said sternly. "Whoever asks, say nothing! You understand?"

The convert did not understand, except that Ommony held evidence that could convict him. Having tasted jail, then hospital, no bird was more in love than he with rewon freedom. Ommony tapped his pocket meaningly.

"Tell a soul you have seen Memsahib Craig, and I'll say where I found this checkbook! Moreover I will prosecute you for trying to steal my dog! In addition I will tell the priests that you told me about their secret instructions to the boatmen——"

"Nay, *sahib!* Nay, not that! Not that of all things! I am dumb! See, *sahib*—I will tear my tongue out rather! Only if your honor will not tell the priests——"

Eyes rolled piteously, and the dusky face turned ashen.

"Silence for silence!" said Ommony sternly, and passed along, out behind the end hut, closing the gate behind him and fastening it with a stick thrust through the iron padlock-rings.

He had not far to go. The dog-boy squatted in the dust beneath a window latticed across with iron. The building was an old one set in a bit of a garden with trees on either hand and with its back against a high wall, over which the roofs of houses rose in intricate confusion. The dog-boy looked up once and nodded, then went on working the dust into patterns with his fingers.

Ommony rapped on the dry teak door very quietly twice. After a minute's pause the door opened gingerly about six inches, and a drunken boatman's questioning face appeared. Ommony sent the man staggering and strode in, kicking the door shut again behind him.

For a moment in the inside gloom he was in danger. A cloth was drawn on a string across the only window, and his eyes were set for the outer glare.

The man who had staggered backward drew a boatman's knife, as good for gutting humans as for caught fish—a thing with a lanyard on it and a heavy handle that makes weight behind the iron blade. Ommony ducked from instinct, and the knife struck humming in the dry wood just behind him. He pulled it out and curled the lanyard on his wrist.

Then another drunkard recognized him and said three words in the boatman jargon that brought the knife-thrower down on his knees in abject supplication, lying with a drunkard's swift, absurd inventiveness.

"Heaven-born, the lanyard slipped through these fingers, which are sweating! It was the purpose to throw the knife into a corner, lest the heaven-born should hurt himself when about to strike me in evident anger!"

"Silence!" commanded Ommony in their tongue in a gruff, low voice, not meant to carry.

But it did, and it was recognized. A short bark and a low whine announced that Diana, near at hand, had recognized her master.

Ommony clucked—that quieted the dog—and looked about him. There were only seven boatmen. Two wore bandages of soft white cloth that might have been the substance of a petticoat, a lot too well applied to have been done by their oar-awkward fingers. They were afraid—self-conscious—guilty of they knew not what exactly—in confusion because they did not yet know what was to be charged against them. Ommony's face was an enigma. Even with fumes of longshore arrack in their heads they knew enough to wait and see.

OMMONY heard the dog's low whimper again, and then a woman's voice without fear instructing somebody—knew beyond any question that the dog would howl a warning to him if there was instant danger—and opened the door at his back. He beckoned the boatmen out into the sunlight, waiting until the last had slunk by.

Then he shut the door and, glancing once quickly to right and left, led them into the evil-smelling shade of thick-boled trees, in a corner with the house on one side and the high wall behind. There no passerby could have seen them.

"What does *she* do?" he demanded.

"*Sahib*, she has torn her garment to bind up woundings that the dog did. She is well. None has harmed her. She begged us to——"

He cut that short with a gesture. He who is wise is careful not to learn too much. Nor does he ask to be informed of what he knows. He asserts what he knows when questions would invite evasion.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"You attacked the dog. The priests so ordered it."

"*Sahib*, we——"

"To the —— with your lies now! Answer me! This is the priests' doing."

"The heaven-born knows too much," admitted one of them.

"You fools were pretending blasphemously that my hound is one of your gods incarnate. The priests heard of it and threatened you unless you stole the animal and drowned her. Now you have failed, will the priests admit they gave those orders to you?"

They grinned. They knew from much experience how the priests would handle that predicament.

"The priests will leave you to be punished for attempted theft of a *sahib's* dog—for being drunk—for hurling a knife at me——"

"*Sahib*, the heaven-born's honor heard this man confess it was a slip of the hand that——"

"And for violence to a *memsahib!* For decoying her and shutting her inside a stinking room for God knows what evil purpose!"

"*Sahib, sahib*, that is untrue! She——"

He checked them again with a gesture. They were sobering, and the lees of arrack fumes no longer were enough to keep too much truth from escaping unless he acted censor.

"Yet you are good boatmen. You rowed well on the journey."

That was art—immodest, opportune—applied, as all art is, to the occasion, using truth to point men's thought a fraction higher, prostituting pride of honest oarsmanship in this case to the ends of forestry. They smirked. There is no pride like the boatman's in his skill.

"The priests did this," said Ommony.

He counted on the knowledge that all simple folk who live beneath the heel of priests can distinguish between the priests and their religion, hating the one and drawing comfort from the other, tolerating the official for the sake of glimpses of divinity that they discern beyond him. It is easy to arouse antagonism to a priesthood—very hard to slay men's faith in what priests represent.

"They are always mischief-makers," said a boatman darkly with an air of having heard more than he cared to tell.

The others nodded. Ommony felt the intuitive thrill that told him he was winning.

"Disaster comes of interference without knowledge," he assured them; and the East loves proverbs as the West loves beef and bread.

They nodded sagely. He was talking heart to heart, and had praised their oarsmanship. They understood *him*, at least. To your boats, O watermen!

"Shall the priests not finish what they started?" he demanded. "Will ye bear blame for their devices?"

"Nay, nay! What have *we* done?"

"Truly, ye have only sought to steal my dog, and that is an issue between you and me," he answered.

"Will the heaven-born not protect us?" asked a boatman, taking heart of grace.

"Ye are ingrates," answered Ommony.

"Nay, *sahib*, we are boatmen, sons of boatmen. We be men whose hearts are in us."

"Ye are drunkards," he insisted.

"Nay! A little arrack——"

"To help the priests play tricks on you!"

"The stuff is all gone."

"Bring out the bottle then."

One went in and carried out an old glass flagon still about a third full of the forbidden, pungent stuff. He tried, but was not in time to prevent Ommony from seeing it.

"Ye are liars."

"Nay, we thought it was all finished."

"Give me the flagon."

The man yielded it, and Ommony poured out the poison on the ground before their eyes.

"Now it is finished. Buy no more of it."

"We did not buy that, *sahib*. One came saying it was a gift from the *diwan sahib* because we had rowed swiftly on the journey."

"It was the priests who sent it," said Ommony; and whether that was true or not they took his word for it, he seemed informed about so many things.

He was itching to get away, for he knew the priests were busy with their own solution of affairs. Having given them time in which to makes mistakes, and a show of mysterious activity to force their hand, it was of utmost importance now to find out what the priests were doing.

But he did not dare give these simpletons a hint of his impatience. The easiest way

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

to fail in India is to let her sons know your affair is urgent.

"Listen now to me," he said with an air of having all eternity to lecture in—an air disarming all suspicion, opposite to the customary way of *sahibs*, which by haste stirs opposition. "If you should speak, the priests will turn your words against you."

They nodded. They knew that.

"So say nothing. Watch. Be silent. Keep the *memsahib* within there.

"You shall see priests come presently and carry her away. Say nothing to them, nor let them see you. Simply watch. Then afterward if any ask and if ye would escape from the nets the priests are laying, answer simply what ye saw, explaining nothing, not excusing or accusing. Say—

" 'The priests did this.'

"Ye understand?"

They did. He was advising them to use habitual taciturnity when confronted with whatever they could hardly comprehend. Easy! They nodded.

"Obey, and ye shall find me your friend. If ye disobey my warning, take the consequences!"

"The heaven-born truly will protect us?"

"Yes, unless ye drink again and let loose babbling tongues."

"On the word of boatmen, we obey!"

He gave the knife back, haft forward, to the boatman who had thrown it, and there isn't an emotion under heaven more enduring than that act of grace aroused. The knife was worth a rupee.

The boatman's pride, his dungaree jacket a dirty turban and loin-cloth were pretty nearly all he had. Pride outweighed everything, and the man salaamed as once the rank and file saluted Cæsar. There was manhood and a great emotion expressed in the uplifted hands.

"Warn the others," said Ommony and strode away, not guessing—knowing.

He had turned that trick.

THE dog-boy followed him unbidden. He took no notice until they turned a corner into another alley.

"Go back," he said then. "Keep the dog quiet. Where the dog goes, follow. Leave a trail my messenger can pick up."

The dog-boy dropped astern like a mark thrown overside. Ommony began to show speed. He had left a horse tethered at the gateway leading to the tower, and he surprized the fat, palace-trenched beast into a gallop with a bamboo cane broken from a hedge. Spluttered-up street dust stung the eyes of watchers who passed the word along. Before he regained the guest-house Parumpadpa in a temple cloister knew the line he had taken.

But his thoughts were his own, and he found the *diwan* waiting for him, fidgeting in the veranda armchair, so all the priests gained was anxiety.

"What have they done?" demanded Ommony, pretending unembarrassment for the *diwan's* benefit.

"My friend, they have done the worst!"

"That is always the best thing. It provides excuse for miracles," said Ommony, producing a cigar. "Tell me. There's loads of time."

The *diwan* laughed, but with an effort.

"Fail with your miracle," he answered, "and some of us won't live to see tomorrow!"

"As bad as that?"

Ommony threw the cigar away and chose another, so he might have been referring to tobacco, but the *diwan* recognized the nervousness that had forced the question.

"I dare not go near my office. They have besieged it—emissaries of the priests. They hope to force me to take action or to make a statement that will compromise me.

"The officer who went to—ah—to escort Mrs. Craig to—ah—a safe place—he had no orders to arrest, you understand—the terms were vague—he might interpret them as he saw fit without committing me—has galloped back to say she can't be found. I learned that five minutes ago by telephone. The idiot must have talked, for the priests are saying I have hidden her.

"Their men are stirring up the mob with a tale of my being in missionary pay. They say the missionaries stampeded the elephants. The missionaries are answerable for the resulting death and injury.

"I, they say, am sheltering the woman and being influenced by her behind the scenes. They say my ultimate purpose is to rob the temple revenues in order to get money to plant trees——"

"Well, isn't it?" asked Ommony.

"Trees that will occupy the grazing-grounds and impoverish——"

"The priests! Yes, go on."

"Impoverish the people, they say. They blame Mrs. Craig and her husband for the increase in the cost of fuel. And Craig is

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

making matters worse! He has gone to my office—forced his way in—and is waiting there until I come. The crowd outside is saying I befriend him!"

"Good!" exclaimed Ommony. "Couldn't be better! Don't you befriend him? Hasn't he your protection? Won't it be excellent afterward to be able to say that even the hostile crowd accused you of steadfastly protecting missionaries?"

"Afterwards, my friend? The priests think it is time for a swift uprising. Who shall prophesy of afterwards? There is a crisis *now*. They think the British will do *anything* to avoid dispatching troops——"

"That's almost true," said Ommony.

"They hope to drive all missionaries out, get rid of me and dictate policies in future. They believe they have me and the missionaries compromised."

"Ha-ha!"

"They even speak of his Highness abdicating in favor of a minor."

"Idiots! Have you ten men whom you would dare trust with knowledge that you had stolen public funds?"

"Twoscore. But I do not steal."

"Ten's plenty. Do they look like priests?"

"Some could. There are the eight who usually watch the priests for me. They are in my house now. I can telephone."

"Do that. Have them rigged like Parumpadpa's men and send them here to me, *ek dum*. Tell 'em it's a life-or-death call."

There were servants in the hallway, much too obviously busy to be innocent, so the *diwan* used the extension in Ommony's bedroom. Even so, although he had his own man on the old-fashioned central switchboard, there was desperate risk of leakage.

But there is a risk in every ruse men undertake. Contrivances succeed because of other men's omissions more often than from perfection.

"They will be here in thirty minutes," he said, sitting down again on the armchair facing Ommony on the veranda after discovering the gardener too near and sending him to chase crows away from the distant flower-beds.

"Thirty minutes?" said Ommony. "That means an hour. Shall we waste it worrying ourselves, or use it worrying the priests?"

"If only I knew where Mrs. Craig is! Shall we not search——"

"And learn too much!"

The *diwan* looked relieved. "I see you know."

"I haven't seen her since she disappeared," said Ommony, and the *diwan* nodded.

He began to regret less that he had trusted the solution into this man's hands.

"I vote we go," said Ommony.

"Where now?"

"To the residency."

The *diwan* assented meekly. This was all new experience for him; his method, subtler perhaps and much less active on the surface, resembling more those subsea currents that deflect a keel unknown to the eyes aloft. Storming along, tacking against the headwinds of sedition, reduced him to obedient bewilderment.

"I am like the dog's tail. I wag at your pleasure," he admitted, and Ommony chuckled over that confession all the way to the residency, through crowded streets where men avoided wheels and cantering hoofs as by a miracle, assisted to it by the coachman's whip and objurgation that would have started riots in the West.

THE residency stood alone in sixteen acres of flowering shrubs and immemorial trees, surrounded by a low stone wall—a palace set aloof, an extraterritorial embassy, assigned to an individual whose mission is to watch the nearly independent ruler of a native State and act as communicating link with the British *raj*.

There are States where the resident is kept keyed up until he dies of too much physical and mental strain, collapsing like an overloaded fuse, and is replaced by a new one on less salary. And there are States, as this one, where a man goes for reward, or to be shelved because of inefficiency too vague to be punished by retirement home.

A few reports, occasional telegrams, a visit now and then to the central Government to satisfy the lords of pigeon-holes that all is as it should be in the outer marches, that—quail-shooting—and a lot of morphia between-whiles was Gould's routine. And in his friend the doctor's absence he was prone to overdose himself, fearing abscess and loathing loneliness more than the poison's aftermath.

Gould was a flaw in the machinery, overlooked by the most alert bureaucracy on earth because no strain had hitherto arisen

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

to test his weakness. Now the strain had come he was *hors de combat*—useless—worse, an obstruction in the way.

Ommony stormed at the *chuprassi* on the porch, swearing it was rank indecency to keep a *diwan* at the door. The menial admitted it; but the *burra sahib* was ill; orders were to admit nobody and to accept no messages. The door was not locked; Ommony noticed that. He returned to the carriage, helped the *diwan* out, and, shoving the *chuprassi* to one side, strode in.

"But this is an offense," the *diwan* objected.

All his innate sense of courtesy was aroused along with a new and not vague fear of consequences.

"Come on!" Ommony answered and the *diwan* came down forward in the wake of swift decision.

Servants interposed themselves on the stairs, but Ommony, with the *diwan* leaning on his arm, strode on up, thrusting them aside, offering no explanation. They would not tell him which Gould's bedroom was, but he found it by opening door after door until he came on a locked one and kicked that in.

Gould lay in buttonless pyjamas on a tousled bed beneath a *punkah* that had ceased to swing, unshaven, staring at the two intruders with eyes whose pupils were reduced to pin-points, conveying only mirage to the poisoned brain behind. He muttered unintelligibly.

"Wake up!" commanded Ommony, and shook him.

The answer was a motion like a child's asleep resenting to be disturbed. Ommony caught the *diwan's* eye.

"Witness this," he said.

Then he shook Gould again. No use. The man's intelligence was out of reach.

He went to the cabinet on the wall, chock full of patent medicines, old hypodermics, bottles—threw half of them out impatiently—found an emetic and forced a dose of it down Gould's throat that would have changed the routine of a mule's inside economy. The floor beside the bed grew horrible and the *diwan* clucked compassion. Gould's absent wits, recalled by violence, began to glimmer across the gulf between illusion and reality.

"Wake up!" Ommony commanded.

Intuitive caution came to the aid of the weakening drug and Gould affected a relapse, too dazed to understand anything except that silence possibly was safest. He moaned to awaken pity, and instead was shaken, pinched, slapped, taken by the neck and raised up—made to face reality whether he chose to or not. At last his lips mumbled some kind of question.

"I'm Ommony of the Woods and Forests."

"Go 'way, —— you!"

"This is the *diwan*."

"Too ill t' see him!"

"There's a crisis. Can you handle it? There's——"

"Gimme a shot, old fellow, will you! Stuff's in that——"

"Listen!" Ommony commanded. "Some one must wire. The maharaja's life—yours—mine—the very State's in danger. Insurrection any minute. Get up and take charge!"

"Ill, I tell you! Go 'way! Who are *you?*"

"Ommony. Shall I act?"

"Don't know you! Lemme 'lone!"

"I'll let you alone if you tell me to act for you."

"Go to ——!"

Gould tried to escape again into the realm of effortless illusion. Ommony shook him until his head rolled on his shoulders like a disconnected thing.

"Some one must act for you until the doctor comes."

"Doctor?"

The word impressed him. That was a friend, who knew how to return him to the world he dreaded, by easy stages. Contrast of that memory with this unease set him vomiting again.

"I'll wire for the doctor if you appoint me temporary substitute. Make over to me," coaxed Ommony.

"All right."

Gould collapsed on the bed and hid his face among disheveled sheets.

"You heard?" asked Ommony.

"I bear witness," said the *diwan*.

"Good. Let's leave him."

Ommony led the way down to a large, well-furnished office, where the official secret code reposed in a steel safe and a secretary was supposed to keep official hours. There was no sign of the secretary. Ommony sat down and wrote a telegram:

Gould seriously ill. Has made over to me. Send substitute for him and a doctor. Rush. Grave

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

unrest here due in part to kidnaping of missionary Craig's wife and in part to fuel situation. Priests are so busy trying to establish alibi that suspicion rests on them. Troops may be necessary. Maharaja's forces possibly insufficient. Shall use my own discretion pending arrival of Gould's successor. Don't answer in code.

Signed, COTTSWOLD OMMONY. Woods & Forests.

The *diwan* read it over half-a-dozen times. He suggested changes. Ommony overruled them.

"Why not in code?" asked the *diwan*.

"The priests wouldn't understand the code. Please have that sent at once over the public wire. Then order out every maharaja's man available to keep mobs from forming. I represent the *raj* now, understand. I'm with you, *diwan sahib*—to a finish!"

"And the finish?"

The *diwan* looked dejected.

"What will the finish be?"

"A forest!" Ommony assured him. "More trees than in all the neighboring States together! Courage, *mon ami!* We win!"

CHAPTER VII

"Silence, please, memsahib!"

MRS. CRAIG'S subsequent account of these events was tinged in its early stages by resentment, and as to the end by mixed emotions. Some parts of it, as prejudiced, are not worth setting down; others, that do her credit, are withheld at her request. But the vein of actual occurrence, insofar as it served Ommony's as yet unseeded forest, is not difficult to trace.

No doctrine alien to her instinctive views was needed to set her bandaging those boatmen's wounds. The dog had torn the men badly and scared them worse, for to some imaginative folk a wound from a hound's clean tooth is more to be feared than the filth of their habitual surroundings. Having no other antiseptic, she used the arrack left in a bottle in the inner room, and that stung them enough to satisfy their craving for immediate medical treatment. Most missionary women are adepts at first-aid surgery.

"Now go to the free dispensary," she ordered. "And don't tell any one you saw me."

So they filed out, and were met by the rest of the crew, who added Ommony's commands to hers.

Then she sat down in the stifling room to consider her own case, first throwing all the covers off a string-cot for fear of the inevitable lice. She wondered why she did not feel ashamed of herself.

She had left her husband in the lurch. He was a good, plain, loyal fellow, who would never have left her. She did not doubt he was already exploring all imaginable holes and corners in search of her.

She smiled at that. It served him right, she reflected, for having presumed to agree to her arrest on any terms.

She had never lost her native color-prejudice. Americans abroad, with few exceptions, carry along with enormous trunks the rock-set traditions of their home; and those, for good and evil, are as changeless as the East's conservatism, humans being human under whatever sky.

Arrest for any sake by dark-skinned aliens, whose culture—or lack of it—and creed she equally despised, was more unwelcome to her than death would be. That was not affectation; it was inborn, inbred, ingrained; and there are worse states of mind, possessed by bigots who would blame her.

For another thing, though she hardly knew it, her whole being was in rebellion against the deadly sameness of the mission routine. Seven long years without vacation she had devoted half her energy to Craig's work and the other half to "improving" Craig himself, who was as unimprovable as salt; for what he was, he would be, true to his convictions and afraid of sin if he should venture half a step beyond them.

In total, she was playing hooky. She knew she should go back—considered that inevitable. There was neither profit, pride nor much amusement to be had from sitting in that stifling hut. But there was satisfaction in the thought of scaring Craig, a hope that by delay she might avoid the insolent protection of the maharaja's men and a great contentment in offending Ommony by keeping his beloved dog from him. Ommony had seen through her mask of zeal at first glance, so she hated him as we all hate those who discern what shams we are.

The behavior of the dog was unaccountable. After one penetrating howl Diana had followed into the hut without objection and had lain in a corner, head on paws, as if listening and gathering news by means of an unhuman sense.

Once when a heavy step drew near she

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

had trembled, although apparently not with fear. Then when a low voice had said one word in the next room in an unknown tongue, the dog had yelped and whined. The sound of some one clucking with tongue in his teeth had stopped the whining instantly.

Once after that she had whined, but the low voice of some young fellow crooning just under the window seemed to provide all the consolation necessary. Mrs. Craig tried to look out of the window and discover who the comforter might be, but he was too close to the wall for observation. The crooning continued at intervals, and the dog lay quiet but refused to come near her when she coaxed.

Presently, what with the heat and dread of insects, she decided to move on—perhaps to look for Craig—she would decide that point presently. She tried the door, but could not move it; not all her strength and weight could make the least impression on it.

She went to the window, but that was built into the wall and guarded on the outside by iron latticework. Only part of it was glazed, so she called through it in a low voice. The crooning that had comforted the dog ceased, but there was no other response.

She laughed—at herself. So this was the outcome! Seeking to avoid arrest, she had simply walked into a trap set by the maharaja's men! She might have known that Orientals would use underhanded means. No doubt whichever way she walked they would have simply closed a door or a gate on her. Her actual whereabouts was immaterial to them provided they had her trapped and under observation.

But what brutes! What a cell to keep her locked in! She thought of the Black Hole of Calcutta, and that brought all the calmness of her inborn courage to the surface.

No sense in beating like a bird against unyielding bars! She would rest and reserve her strength! She took the remainder of the arrack, wiped each stick and string of the bare cot, and lay down.

Then the crooning began again, and she was sure a spy had been set beneath the window, who perhaps could see her through some undiscoverable cranny in the wall. All that puzzled her after that was why the dog should like the crooning so and should decline her own proffered caresses.

She lay so long that she almost fell asleep, and had no idea what time it was when some one knocked and the great hound with every hair bristling sprang at the door and stood ready to do battle the instant it opened. Elsa struggled with all her might, tugging at scruff and collar, but she could not drag the dog away. Nor had she any kind of rope, nor anything to fasten a rope to that would have held for an instant.

But the crooning resumed under the window, interspersed with unintelligible speech. Diana went back to her corner and lay down, head on paws as formerly, still growling like a volcano making ready to erupt, but offering no more fight. More mystery!

"Come! But you must take your own chance with the dog. I can't hold her!" she called in English.

SHE expected the Hindu officer who had always been at pains to show such guarded insolence. But in came two men, whose ivory skin showed between the folds of garments more like Brahman priests' than soldiers.' She was not sure of it, not having mastered all the intricacies of caste and costume, but she was nearly sure they were priests or temple acolytes. She could see six more behind them waiting in the other room.

They smiled, saluted her, made gestures that invited her to come with them; in fact, were not uncivil in the least; and, strangest of all, they took no notice of the dog, who growled as if thunder quickened in her lungs. Undoubtedly the crooning outside the window kept the dog from attacking them; but how did they know they were safe? They had no weapons she could see—no means to defend themselves against flashing teeth; yet they were so supremely confident they did not even turn their heads to look. Mystery again!

She decided to follow without protest. The dog submitted to be led by the collar, and she signed to the two to lead the way. But they stood aside for her and looked to make sure there was nothing of hers they should carry. The six in the outer room, with evident respect but no trace of hesitancy, formed up around her, two ahead, one on either hand two behind, and marched out into the open.

She saw the boatmen, some now wearing

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the unbleached calico bandages of the free dispensary. They all salaamed sheepishly in a group under the wayside trees, but made no other comment. The two men who had first entered the room brought up the rear of the strange procession, and at a little distance behind them a young man followed, whom she suspected of being the author of the crooning.

She knew then by the declining sun that it was nearly five o'clock, and discovered, too, that she was hungry. She thought of Joan of Arc being led to the stake by priests, and smiled, by no means afraid of laughing at herself.

Romanticism, though it forever made appeal, was an element she had turned her back on long ago. She mocked it, for like the U. S. Senator it was part of the might-have-been. She assured herself there was no romance in her existence.

She tried to feel matter-of-fact. There were crows on the wall that cawed impudently. Overhead the kites wheeled ceaselessly against a pure blue sky. A pariah-dog glimpsed Diana's shape between her escort's legs and fled incontinently. The wheels of a bullock-cart were creaking, and the driver's agonied invective grated on her ear. All was as usual except that she, Elsa Maconochie Craig, was walking a prisoner in the midst of Brahman priests, perhaps within a stone's throw of her husband!

She decided to scream at the first profitable opportunity, and conserved her breath meanwhile.

But humdrum opportunities had ceased. It was a day of baffling unexpectedness. Out of the boatmen's sight, behind a godown that projected into the alley, one of her escort threw a sheet over her head, another wrapped it deftly, and a third, using English, offered sharp advice, with his mouth two inches from her muffled ear.

"Make no outcry! Obey us! We will gag you if you scream! Be wise!"

They had not hurt her. They had not touched her more than necessary. They did not seize her hands, which were free beneath the colored cotton sheet. And it was a clean sheet; it did not even smell offensive! They had hardly frightened her, but that may have been because of her iron courage.

Knowing they were eight to one, she decided not to try to resist them, just then at any rate. But she wondered why the dog did not offer fight; she had let go the collar in her first instinctive struggle with the sheet, and did not even know where the dog had gone.

Naturally now she could not be aware of Ommony's dog-boy with both arms around Diana's neck engaging the hound's whole attention.

She heard a door open, remembered she had noticed it in the midst of a short, otherwise blind wall between two locked go-downs, was led through, heard it slam and be locked behind her, and felt herself pushed against the tail-end of a wheeled conveyance of some kind.

"Get in, please!" said the same voice that had cautioned her previously.

Again no violence was offered—no unwelcome aid. They let her grope her own way. Two men followed; then a third. She heard Diana leap in and felt the hound's head on her lap.

She guessed she was in an old-fashioned covered ox-cart with her back to the corner by the curtained front end. In a moment more she knew it, for the driver cried aloud and the wheels creaked.

Then interminable bumpings at a snail's pace over cobbled streets and unpaved roads that wound to right and left, leaving behind at last the noises that told of town life and fording narrow streams occasionally, where men seized hold of the wheels to help the oxen.

"Where am I being taken?" she asked once through the all-concealing yellow sheet. But the only answer came from the same man who had spoken twice before—

"Silence, *memsahib*, please!"

If they had treated her disrespectfully she might have made their business troublesome—might have obliged them to play their hand to the utmost and commit themselves to violent handling of a missionary's wife, for which there would be stern accounting afterward. But they did not.

The three men sat apart from her. She thought she could feel their eyes, but never a hand approached. So she sat still, listening to the wheels, the soft thud of the oxen's feet, and the tramp of the remainder of her escort marching alongside and behind.

She felt the gloom within the cart grow darker and guessed the hour of sunset; but the cries of the driver continued, and the wheels bumped on, it seemed forever, until she could have wept from very weariness.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

But she was not of the weeping kind—took pride in that, and comfort from the pride.

IT WAS probably after nine o'clock when she reached her destination. There at last they took the sheet away when the ox-cart halted before a gate under an arch, whose outlines were almost indeterminable in the gloom.

Again the men's politeness disarmed fear. They appeared no whit ashamed of having carried her off, but bent on showing her all deference, and their salaams were manly, not the cringing sort she was accustomed to. They stood on the brick steps of a porch, four on either hand, saluting as if she were a captured empress. Iron in her character insisted on her going forward up the steps with no fuss and no questions asked.

She was a prisoner after their own hearts. They brag of her, those stalwarts, to this day.

The bronze-barred door swung open, and she passed in, hearing it clang behind, but never turning. So imperially, looking straight before her, Elsa Craig entered her prison, staring up beyond the arch, between sentinel trees, at star-dust swimming in a purple sky.

She was in fairyland!

And she was glad to be alone! Craig, had he been there, would have spoken bitterly of images of gods that smiled benignly amid shrubbery, as if they were hiding to play games. She didn't care if they were idols. She loved them. They were beautiful.

There were fountains that tinkled and splashed music, even at that hour. The air was moist and cool. An old, old servitor advanced and, beckoning, walked before her down a brick path between verdure trained to grow in sequences as rhythmic as string symphonies. The scent of flowers and shrubbery arose and waned in obbligato to a melody of form. They skirted a lotus pond in which, between the lordly, lazy fronds reflections of stars reshone like jewels buried in the pool, and in their dim, calm light the meditative image of Jinendra sat.

They came to a house of marble as appealing to the eyes as are those ancient little temples that stand aloof wherever mystic worshipers have dwelt—all pure—each true line drawn by one who knew his life was neither this nor that thing but eternity. Candlelight within made peace, so prisoned in the stone, appear alive and welcoming.

The rays of a rising full moon touched the edges of the roof, redrawing man's concrete masterpiece in liquid silver. Elsa gasped. The old man-servant, saying not one word but beckoning as if he, too, felt the inspiration of the place, led on.

They approached the house, he ever turning to be sure she understood, up marble steps on which tree-shadows in irregular design lay as if each touch of purple had been drawn in place by Him Who rules the symphonies.

As in a dream one passes disconnectedly from phase to phase, she found herself in a chamber where moonlight through the open window shone on a table spread for her—rice, bread, milk, honey—things that men may eat without accepting the rôle of executioner—not interfering with the *karma* of the beasts.

In a chamber next to it were clean clothes laid on a spotless bed of hand-wrought sandalwood. A woman older than the man made signs to her to change into the comfortable dress of a Hindu lady of rank—loose, lovely stuff embroidered richly, yet as simple in design as all true art.

She laughed. She needed that. Hitherto she was intruding. Now, bathed and rearrayed, she was no harsh discord but a new, strong note in harmony. The mirror, held by the old woman, told her that.

How Craig would have scorned!

The meal, with the old attendant silent behind her chair, was like supper before sailing into new dimensions. It dawned on her intelligence how mean and narrow is the Western view that mentions heathen in the same breath with ancient culture. She could doubt Christianity in that hour, along with all her educated notions, excepting one—she was still white, and American.

"Who built this place?" she asked in the dialect.

And as she spoke a bulbul piped his anthem to the rising moon.

"It was always here," said the old attendant.

"Who owns it?"

"The *diwan sahib*—now."

"Who formerly?"

"The *diwan sahib's* wife."

"But she has been dead for twenty years. Who lives here now?"

"None, saving caretakers."

"Does the *diwan sahib* never use it?"

"Seldom. At times his honor comes to

Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

observe that all is as it was when *she* lived, for she loved the place. He planted and adorned it for her Summer-house, building the high wall about it for her greater peace. She was a holy woman, and he loved her more than all else. Here she would come to meditate; and here she died.

"The *diwan sahib* gave orders to us to preserve all things as they were when she enjoyed them. And we also loved her. Therefore the command is easy of fulfilment, and the *diwan sahib* finds no fault.

"The fish in the pond are fed. None harms the birds. The gardeners pull weeds. None enters, save the *diwan* rarely. The *memsahib* is the first since *she* died."

"Why am I here?"

The question came to her lips unbidden, and was out before she could restrain it.

"None knows. The order came this afternoon. The *diwan sahib* sent word over his seal that your honor is to be treated in all things as *she*, the *diwan sahib's* wife, was, save only that your honor may not pass beyond the wall, nor may any have admittance."

"Then I'm your prisoner?"

"The *diwan sahib* said you are his guest."

"I wasn't a willing guest!"

"Whatever the *memsahib* wishes is an order, saving only the key of the gate."

She went out and walked in moonlight—watched and marveled at her own reflection in the lotus pond—heard the liquid bulbul note that is Nature's effort to explain the gist of hope; and a great contentment grew on her. She began to wish Craig were there, believing it would move him, too, to a mood more mixed with tolerance.

That set her thinking about Craig, and her own new tolerance shed kinder light on him. She saw the manliness of his erect and incorruptible pugnacity—the boy's heart that had borne him storming to the maharaja in the face of what would have discouraged most men—the conviction, too rock-hewn to be altered by even her seven-year siege.

She found she could excuse a deal of narrowness for sake of that steadfast honesty, mistaken often, but unlike her own uncompromising. There, where she stood in moonlight, at a distance, she condoned his passionate regard for bricks and straw—discovered that, even if he thought otherwise, they were only landmarks he had set up on a hard trail. And now they were all to be reset. She would help him!

Suppressed intelligence awoke in Elsa Craig that night and mellowed her—until she thought of Ommony. She hated him!

Which led to a belated recollection of the dog. She wondered what had happened to Diana, and who had fed her. Had she gone away again with those men? If so, the men must be Ommony's, or otherwise Diana would have rebelled. Yet—supposing they *were* Ommony's, why had the hound shown fight when they first appeared, only to be calmed astonishingly by the crooning and gibberish of somebody under the window?

She could not make head or tail of it as she strode with hands behind her along brick paths between the peaceful trees. The old attendant followed—silent as another shadow—keeping his distance unobtrusively. It was no use asking him. He had probably never heard of Ommony.

She wearied of the problem, and discovered then that she was weary in every atom of her being. So she returned and went to bed on a mattress stuffed with rose-leaves, shaken into utter softness by the old woman who attended her.

The last waking thought she remembered was of peace and the breath of sandalwood. But her dreams were of Ommony, whom she detested even more in that realm of illusion than she had done waking.

He appeared in the form of a ghoul with a great magnifying-glass, through which he scrutinized her, nodding as he analyzed in all its naked ugliness the pride, ambition and hypocrisy compounded, that he told her was the essence of her being! She woke up three times screaming at him that he lied, and each time the old woman brought her cooling drinks.

CHAPTER VIII

"Sir William Molyneux will blame you priests!"

WHAT Ommony hoped for was really the inevitable. Reactionaries always make mistakes, counting on what were possibly good tactics yesterday to force the issue of today, like those who shoot behind the moving mark.

On the heels of Ommony the priests' spies nosed and listened for the news. But they themselves were news. Public knowledge that the priests had plans afoot made countless other eyes and ears alert, and the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

spies were watched more closely than *they* looked out for Ommony. Accordingly when men, a move and several hours too late, invaded the alley where the boatmen lived, there were a score of hangers-on who overheard and oversaw what happened.

It was known to the priests that the *diwan* meant to imprison Elsa Craig for her protection. They supposed it done. They approved that and, as Ommony intended that they should, had heralded intention as a fact, denouncing the *diwan* to the mob for hiding the woman and being influenced by her behind the scene.

But Craig, rushing from his ruined mission compound to the *diwan's* office—thence, in the *diwan's* absence, to the taciturn police, demanding where his wife might be and trumpeting fear broadcast, had advertised to the priests the possibility of some miscarriage of arrangements. Craig ought to have known where his wife was. They wasted three hours speculating and conferring.

Then a minor spy sent word, shoulder over shoulder with the speed of relay signaling, that Ommony and the boatmen had had speech. So half a dozen master-spies were sent, for the sake of overawing numbers and the advantage of a checked account, to dredge out the boatmen's information. And they were so proud of being Parumpadpa's agents that they made no secret at all of what they were but swaggered to the rendezvous all six together.

"What said Ommony sahib?" they demanded.

"Nothing. He came for his dog."

"Where is the dog?"

"She bit some of us and went away."

"Where is Ommony sahib?"

"Who are we that we should know that? He came and he went."

The hangers-on were crowding close. The spies became impatient. The boatmen, with Ommony's promise to befriend them recent in their ears, admired the notion of showing priests' spies the worst of it before an audience.

"Did he ask where the *memsahib* of the mission is?"

"He asked where his dog is, saying nothing else."

It began to be clear to one of the boatmen that misinformation would die stillborn unless brought forth voluntarily. Scorn of the priests' intelligencers and the simpleton's joy in intrigue compelled speech.

"Ha-ha!" he bawled out for the audience's benefit. "If he sought the *memsahib* of the mission, he should have asked you, not us! Lo, she hid in that house. Priests came and took her. We know that, for we all stood here beneath these trees and watched!"

In vain the boatmen were reviled. They stuck to the tale, refusing to change a word or to attempt an explanation. Threats were thrown away on them.

"We know not why she hid in there, nor where she is. Priests came, and they took her. We be boatmen—honest men!"

"Ye are liars!" said the spies; but that was small use.

The news was out. The unbidden audience, increased by the boatmen's shouts to nearly a hundred, was delighted. Whatever they might think of Parumpadpa—and opinions of him were mixed—they all conceded to the priests a near-divine omniscience in dealing with intrigue. The priests themselves had busily instilled that superstition.

So, faster than the spies decamped to bear the incredible information, the audience dispersed through different streets to brag of what they knew.

"Parumpadpa has carried off the missionary's wife and hidden her!"

"Parumpadpa was too clever for the *diwan*! He forestalled him! He sent his men to seize the missionary's wife!"

"They throttled her!"

"She lies in a crypt beneath a temple, none knows exactly where!"

"She is to be eaten alive by rats!"

Each version of the tale found creditors, and the boatmen, strong in their faith in Ommony but not so sure now of his exact instructions, confirmed everything, inventing new versions of their own.

"The priests told us to steal the new god Dhai Enna, who came in the form of a big dog and was enslaved by Ommonee."

That resembled many an Indian story of the gods on earth, passing muster easily among the ignorant.

"The *memsahib* of the mission also wanted to steal Dhai Enna, because she is against all gods and sought to kill this new one. So the priests took both of them, and that is all we know."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

PUBLIC opinion, perennially instructed, had it that the priests were forever behind and in advance of every new turn of affairs. That "the priests think, then the *diwan* moves" was a proverb.

It was plausible, and even likely, that the priests should have forestalled the *diwan's* action. They had done that frequently in the memory of all who followed events with discernment.

So within the hour the city's humor changed from irritable anger to excited guessing as to what the other side would do. In vain the priests sent broadcast contradictions of the story. Those were taken for official fibs intended to deceive the enemy. The man in the street was on the inside this once, and the more the priests denied it, the more implicitly the mob believed.

Long after dark those who could struggle past the cordon of maharaja's troops swarmed around the guest-house because some one said the *diwan* was in there conferring with Ommony. And none needed to tell the old *diwan* why they came; he had all the news by telephone.

And hot-foot through the sweating cordon and the clamoring mob, with shouts of "*Tar! Tar!*"* that made even that throng yield a passage for him, came a messenger in loin-clout and khaki jacket.

"*Tar* for the *diwan sahib!*"

It was perfect—better than a play or than the tales men listen to of evenings. Verily the gods all had a hand in this! Events were on the anvil. Siva the Destroyer was evolving out of Siva who creates.

"Now watch!"

But it was too dark then to see from the top of the wall, and for fear of soldiers none dared penetrate within the guest-house grounds to see the *diwan*, *vis-à-vis* to Ommony on the veranda, tear open the envelop and sign for it. His hands were trembling so he could hardly read the penciled message. But Ommony chuckled.

The paper bore the marks of sweating thumbs, and was even crumpled. In all likelihood a copy of it was in Parumpadpa's hand that minute:

Cottswold Ommony accredited as temporary acting substitute for Gould, who is withdrawn on the ground of illness. His Majesty's Government regard with grave concern report that priests are suspected of responsibility for disappearance of Mrs. Craig. Please send motor-boat to railhead to meet Sir William Molyneux, who is proceeding on today's train to take over residency. Pending his arrival please accord Mr. Ommony all privileges and assistance in tracing Mrs. Craig, who has his Majesty's Government's official recognition.

He passed the telegram to Ommony, who squealed delight.

"That's 'Brass-Face' Molyneux! A —— fine fellow, but the hardest nut in the bag. They keep him for emergencies. It was he who horsewhipped Raja Kutch Dowlah——"

"*He* deserved worse," said the *diwan*.

"Yes, but nobody but Brass-Face would have dared. It saved a massacre. Now——"

"You see I am to help you find Mrs. Craig," the *diwan* interrupted, judging that no time for reminiscences.

"Go ahead. Help me."

"We know where she is!"

"The priests don't. The wire doesn't say *where* we're to find her."

The *diwan* stroked his beard, and his kind old eyes grew terrified. Not for amusement had he fought the priesthood during thirty intriguing years. He knew the depth of their ability to wreak havoc and avoid responsibility.

"My friend——"

"I accept full liability," said Ommony. "They'll break me on the wheel if this fails. I promise to absolve you."

"But isn't the easiest thing to answer that telegram and say Mrs. Craig is safe and sound?" the *diwan* objected. "Then let Sir William Molyneux——"

"Come and wonder what the stew was all about, eh? Brass-Face is no diviner of subtleties. You'll get no trees. The priests will have scored. They'll lay the whole blame to the missionaries. Brass-Face will insult Craig—he hates the tribe.

"You'll be superseded. Your successor will be nominated by the priests. No, *sahib*, we've got to win this main!"

The *diwan* nodded. He was as clay in the hands of this man. No sooner was he nervous than the memory of something he had seen Ommony do brought back confidence.

"What then?" he asked, his eyes resuming their accustomed brown placidity.

"It's Parumpadpa's move next," Ommony answered. "He's sure to do something

*Telegram.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

imprudent. The crowd's in no mood for——"

"Very nearly out of hand," the *diwan* answered. "Hear them!"

Over and through the trees surrounding the triangle on which the guest-house stood a gradually rising uproar increased and waned as if from two sides centers of commotion were approaching. It was hard to distinguish between rage and exultation, but it seemed as if the two elements were mixed. And in among the din the shouts of troopers and their officers ordering the crowd back subtracted nothing from the tumult.

Anger and adulation slowly separated into vortices, approaching separate gates at angles of the grounds, and they could hear the troopers leave one party to care for itself and go to the rescue of the other. Then through both gates mounted men entered galloping.

"Parumpadpa sends his emissary demanding audience!" said the first man.

"Craig sahib asks admittance!" said the other.

Ommony caught the *diwan's* eye and nodded twice.

"Admit both!" the *diwan* ordered.

Neither spoke while the difficult business of letting the right ones in and keeping out unauthorized intruders was under way. Advice at the last minute to the man who must take the reins distracts. Then nothing but assurance of strong support is of the least use, and that is best done without words. The *diwan* felt aware that whether he should play this hand supremely well or make mistakes, he could count on Ommony to help face consequences, some men having the gift of conveying that assurance silently.

First came Craig, alone, white-suited, striding like a fantom up the graveled drive, hat in hand and brushing sweat with three fingers from his forehead.

"Mr. Ommony! Your Excellency! Can either of you tell me where my wife is?"

He spoke the instant his foot was on the veranda and approached their corner with one hand on the rail as if grateful for something to lean on. Ommony rose from his chair and pushed Craig into it.

"Thank you. I'm tired out. I've searched every conceivable place she might have gone to. Your boatmen, Mr. Ommony, tell me priests have carried her off. They assured me that one of our converts, John Ishmittee, saw it happen; but he has disappeared. Now the crowd say the same thing. I'm afraid——"

"Not you!"

Ommony spoke abruptly. The old *diwan* was too aware of sympathy to trust himself; it was not his way to cause unnecessary anguish. But Ommony was like a surgeon with a sharp knife, daring for the sake of what he saw beyond.

"Sit down here. Wait and see. Have you eaten?"

Over Craig's protest he called for sandwiches, and those arrived simultaneously with Parumpadpa's emissary—Jannath—none less—sent that he might be blamable if plans miscarried, since it had been he who first proposed them.

JANNATH, rather puffy-faced and ivory-pale in the lanternlight, stood on the path below them with the official meekness and abominable pride so blended as only a Brahman can accomplish. He would not set foot on the veranda lest its touch defile his feet, and he waited for the *diwan*, who was not a Brahman, to salute him first.

The *diwan* accorded him the superficial gesture of reverence and mumbled request for a blessing that Brahmans accept perforce when deeper homage is refused. Jannath, equally perfunctory, responded.

Then for the space of a minute there was silence, broken only by Craig's munching at a sandwich that annoyed the priest until his eyes blazed indignation. It was not cow-meat between the bread, but Jannath chose to suppose it was.

"What good fortune brought you here?" the *diwan* asked at last politely.

"Parumpadpa sent me. He demands to know why you have told the people that the missionary's wife is in our hands. We know *nothing* of her."

"I said no such thing," the *diwan* answered quietly.

"Then whence the tale?"

The insolence was perfect, but the *diwan* knew the uselessness of letting that draw fire. His voice was gentle and his manner almost deferent:

"You priests know better than I whence rumors spring. By coming you have saved me from going to ask you that very question. Where is she? Whence the rumor?"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"We know *nothing* of her!" Jannath answered with disgust.

Craig left his chair suddenly, gulping the last of a sandwich, and leaned forward over the rail to peer into Jannath's face. Behind his back Ommony caught the *diwan's* eye.

"He can only do good," he whispered.

"If you priests don't know where my wife is, at least you can find her if any one can," he said, speaking the language fluently enough but with a Western idiom that made the reasonable statement ring doubly offensive in the priest's ears.

Jannath stood like an insolent image in painted wood, ignoring him; and that offended Craig much worse than hot retort. He resumed:

"I've never harmed you. Repeatedly I've offered to be friendly. All the return I've ever had has been unfair accusations and malignant lies about my converts. I believe you priests were at the bottom of that elephant business. I believe you know where my wife is.

"If you priests kept your hands off her for reasons of policy, nevertheless I'm sure you know what happened. Indirectly *at least*, if not directly, you're responsible for her disappearance. I demand her back at your hands!"

He paused, not for breath, for he was quite unconscious of himself, but to watch for the effect on Jannath, whose face remained as stolid as an idol's. Not for any inducement in the world was Jannath willing to appear to recognize before witnesses this enemy of all his kind. Craig, used to unresponsive audiences, came at him again, leaning forward, as it were with both hands on a pulpit-rail.

"Now I'm a Christian. You hate me for it. That's the offense in your eyes for which you've visited this cruel wrong on me. But I'll prove to you here and now what Christian ethics are. No vengeance. No, not even punishment if you'll reverse yourselves.

"Give me my wife back unharmed, and I'll ask the *diwan* and the British Government to take no steps against you. Now, tonight, I want her at your hands!"

Jannath remained motionless — ivory-white insolence—the flickering lamplight exaggerating the scorn of his proud lips. Craig knew he had made no impression and searched his magazine of arguments for anything that might penetrate the priest's chilled armor. He rightly judged an appeal for pity would be of no use; thought of threats, and as his bearing betrayed discarded those for the moment; then recalled that his own agitation for forestry would have depleted temple revenues if successful.

Perhaps that was all the trouble. If so—he would not yield on any point of principle; but the financial argument——

"If you return my wife unharmed to me tonight I will withdraw my claim for the damage done to my mission buildings. I will not retaliate. There shall be no consideration on my part of revenge."

"You hear him?" asked the *diwan*.

They both might just as well have spoken to the empty air. The priest refused to acknowledge by word or gesture that he was even conscious of Craig's demand. But the *diwan* seemed encouraged. He moved in his chair with a chess-player's suddenly born activity and read the telegram aloud, translating it for Jannath's benefit.

"You see," he said, "the British *raj* is interfering. They accuse you priests. When Sir William Molyneux comes there is no knowing what will happen. It is best to have Craig memsahib found before he arrives."

"We know *nothing* of her!" Jannath insisted hotly.

"Be advised by me," the *diwan* answered. "Tell Parumpadpa to produce her *before* Sir William Molyneux arrives. They say he has scant respect for Brahmans."

For sixty breathless seconds Jannath dwelt on his retort, his face immobile but his eyes ablaze with energy that burned in the subtle brain behind them. But he reserved his subtlety for future use.

"The people threaten insurrection!" he said meaningly.

"Sir William Molyneux will blame you priests," the *diwan* answered. "Therefore it is to your advantage to calm the populace."

Discovering strength where he had looked for weakness, Jannath cut short the interview, turning without another word and striding away magnificently, followed by attendants who emerged from shadows as if they were secret service men to protect him against the *diwan's* treachery instead of being Parumpadpa's spies intent on taking back an absolutely true version of what took place. Parumpadpa knew better than to trust to Jannath's sole account.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The crowd at the gate roared jubilantly as the Brahman appeared and the troopers forced an opening for him. Some of them looked for a hint that would have laid the city at their mercy; none expected less than an assurance of great doings presently.

But it may be that Jannath's face betrayed no optimism, or perhaps his followers, who had heard what passed, dropped words of caution here and there. It happened at all events that Jannath's progress through the mob was marked by lessening clamor, and within ten minutes of his leaving all the lined-up troopers sat their mounts at ease with only a dwindling crowd to watch. Then—

"We win!" said Ommony, reaching for cigars.

"You mean?" demanded Craig.

"Trees, fellow; trees!"

"My wife——"

"You'll have her back."

"You think Parumpadpa can produce her?"

"He *must!*" answered Ommony. "Brass-Face Molly is no long-range diplomatist. His reputation goes before him, and his trail is up and down the land. They know he'll fight without gloves. They'll produce her before he gets here if they have to make a new Eve out of Adam's rib to do it! Bed! The prescription for you is bed, my friend. Come on, I'll show you to your room."

CHAPTER IX

"Obey the priests!"

"EMERGENCY and heaven are the same thing — 'there is no night there,' " said Ommony, grinning, returning to the veranda. "Poor Craig's in hell. I gave him a dose of sulphonal. How about you, *diwan sahib?* Tired?"

"With a weariness none could guess who hadn't a throne and a people's destiny to watch. These old bones are all but ready for the dissolution. Months—a year or two perhaps—then rest. None meanwhile if there is duty."

"Well, there is," said Ommony, and sat down facing him.

The *diwan* waited. It was likely the night would hold as much anxiety for him as for Craig. Craig, should the drug do its duty, would suffer no interruption, whereas he would be called to hear every rumor. He preferred to stand the racket sitting upright.

"Those priests will make their big break now," said Ommony.

"Assuredly."

"They've two chances. The first is to find Mrs. Craig. How much risk is there of your men letting the cat out of the bag?"

"None. None whatever. All those men are absolutely loyal. The priests might search for a month, but they would never find a trace of her."

"Splendid. Parumpadpa has one move then, and he's checkmate."

"Tell me, *sahib*," said the *diwan*, "why did you insist that Mrs. Craig should change into a Hindu dress?"

"For the same reason that Diana and the dog-boy are on duty. Don't ask to know too much just yet, *sahib*, or you may be obliged to lie your way out of it; that's a serious matter at your time of life. Are you sure you made it clear to your men that they were to order Mrs. Craig's own clothes thrown over the wall?"

"They understood. I made them repeat the instructions. I wish I understood your object half as clearly."

"There's a hitch somewhere," said Ommony, pulling out his watch.

For a while he was silent with his elbow on an arm of the chair and the short, crisp hair of his beard protruding through the fingers of one hand. The other was on his knee. He was listening, but the only sounds were the occasional stamping of a trooper's horse, and now and then voices as the lingering remnants of the crowd resumed stale argument.

"I'll have to go," he said after a while. "If I might do that without explaining things that no *diwan* in your predicament should know——"

"I will wait here for you, *sahib*."

"Thanks. That's good of you."

Ommony was on his feet when the sound that he listened for arrested him. It was almost like a jackal's cry, not indistinguishable from that by one unused to night notes in the wilderness. He grinned and sat down. After a pause he whistled one note.

Presently, a shadow among shadows, making no sound, Diana slunk across the driveway, disappearing instantly into the dark under the veranda's projecting edge. There she whined so softly that it was hardly audible.

Ommony snapped his fingers. The dog came stealthily up-steps and paused when

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

she saw the *divan*. He sat still. Ommony motioned to him to turn his head away. The instant he did that Diana leaped and landed in the dark behind Ommony's chair, thrusting her nose into the hand he let fall.

"When I gave orders to the dog-boy I forgot these gates might be shut and guarded," Ommony explained. "I suppose Di jumped the wall. That was a wonder of a good jump, Di old lady!"

"And it means?" asked the *diwan*.

"This."

He showed a piece of slobbery turban-end the dog had dropped into his hand.

"It's the dog-boy's summons."

He went into the house and came out hooded in the all-disguising cotton sheet the middle classes throw about them when they walk abroad at night. His trousers were rolled up, and his bare feet showed through sandals. On his head was a *bunnia's* turban, and his very walk was changed to fit the new part.

"Careful, *sahib!*" warned the *diwan*. "If they recognize you——"

"Risks are for the rashly wise to run," laughed Ommony. "I need your pass to get me by the troopers."

So the *diwan* wrote an order to pass Bunnia Chirol Varma out or in, and Ommony sent his great hound into the bedroom out of harm's way. Then, having salaamed the *diwan* obsequiously, he walked to the nearest gate with the heels of his loose sandals rutching on the gravel and dislike of exercise written all over him as if he were a Hindu merchant to the manner born.

He swallowed insult at the gate, as *bunnias* must who crave the good-will of the military, answering abuse with meekness and sufficient flattery.

"It is good," said he, "that we have brave men for our protection. May many gods strengthen and bless you to preserve us from violence and our godowns from plundering if insurrection comes!"

Small coins changed hands—the "slipper-money" due by ancient custom from visitors to a gate's custodian, and no less welcome to a soldier in the right recipient's eclipse.

"Would that all *bunnias* were as wise as that one!"

With his turban just a little to one side, as surely no man in disguise would think of wearing it, he disappeared into the gloom, avoiding moonlight, threading unlighted thoroughfares with a woodsman's sixth sense of direction, and arrived presently at the little two-room hut with a wall behind it, in the alley where the boatmen lived. There, in the evil-smelling shadow of the trees beside the road, he sat down and whistled softly.

NO SOUND answered him, not even footfall, but what night have been the dog-boy's ghost flitted across a shaft of moonlight and squatted down beside him. Even his breathing was inaudible.

"You found the clothing?"

"Nay, Dhai Enna did. They who tossed it over the wall are fools, moreover without conscience, making no signal. So the bundle fell into such a tangle of thorns and rocks as snakes love.

"I waited until God made me impatient. Then I sent Dhai Enna to make circuit of the walls, and she smelled it, where it lay so that no eye could have seen it. And so I, naked, wrapped my clothes on her for fear of cobras, and she brought it, leaving my jacket caught among the thorns. I did not dare fetch the jacket nor send the dog back for it, for fear of snakes."

"You shall have a new one," said Ommony.

"Nay, *sahib*, not a new one. The shooting-jacket with the leather pockets that the *sahib* tore at the armhole when he jumped off the elephant!"

"Yes."

The dog-boy thrilled in silence for a moment, then resumed:

"So I carried the bundle of clothing to the priests in the temple of Siva as the *sahib* ordered. I having no jacket, they believed my tale that I was a son of a gardener working for Bunnia Chirol Varma at his house by the waterside. They answered they had never heard of him; but what of that?

"I said I had found the clothing by the water's edge and had wondered at how excellent it was. Meaning to steal it, I had run away. Then, fear obliging me, I had brought it to them. I begged them to take it and to let me go and to say nothing. But they said much, calling me thief and what not else. One—a great one with a snout like a dog's and the upper half of his head

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

bald and, as it were, swollen, said I should be kept within the temple. But I cried no, that the gods would visit me——"

"You will be a great man some day," said Ommony.

"—and they saw I was afraid. So another said I will be given to the police if I am found within the city. And at that I ran, crying, 'No, no!' and found Dhai Enna where I had left her hidden, and had much trouble to bring her away unseen because of many men who watched the priests and some who saw me and wished to question me. But I escaped them all. Only the dog broke my hold and attacked some men who looked for me in a clump of bamboos in a garden. They cried out that Ommonee must be near and no doubt spying on the priests."

"Excellent!" said Ommony.

"So I came to this place, and sent the dog with a rag from my turban as the *sahib* ordered. I shall need a new turban."

"Granted. How did you get from the place where the *memsahib* is hidden, to the temple of Siva? That is a great distance, isn't it?"

"There rode a fool of a peasant, much afraid of darkness, and his horse, which was a young one, was afraid of Dhai Enna. The man fell off and ran, crying, 'Bagh!'* so I caught the horse and rode, Dhai Enna following, and I turned the horse loose when I came to the city."

"Very good. Now bring the head boatman here," ordered Ommony. "Be swift."

So after not much tapping on a broken pane but much more whispering, the head boatman's bulk took form against a background of purple sky between the tree-trunks, and Ommony bade him squat down.

"*Sahib*, there came a priest who offered us money to leave the city," he began abruptly, being, too, a tactician in his way.

"How much money?"

"Not enough. We receive very small pay from the *diwan*, but it is every month, and we would be fools to forfeit that. He went away to get permission to increase his offer, saying he will return tonight."

"I think he will return with a totally different offer—perhaps a better one," said Ommony.

The boatman's self-importance was increasing; it could be actually felt. But watermanship breeds corollary; sly he could be, and avaricious; but he could not help but respond to bold appeal and downright daring any more than his simple thinking could resist intrigue. He stated his case deliberately, as he would have faced a rising sea.

"If we should leave the city, then the *sahib* will have no more hold over us in the matter of our trying to steal his dog."

It was clear enough that the offense had dwindled to extremely small proportions in the boatmen's estimation.

"I undertook to be your friend," said Ommony. "Has that no bearing on it?"

"But the priest who came declared the priests are our friends."

"Do you believe him?"

"Nay, he was a liar. We know that. But the priests are willing to pay us much money perhaps."

"I'm not," answered Ommony. "I don't buy or sell friendship."

The boatman was silent for a long while. 'Longshore avarice pulled tug-o'-war with the spirit of open water in his inner man. The fact that Ommony was in disguise and obviously scheming did not simplify the issue.

"Are we to lose the priests' money and have their enmity?" he asked at last.

"Take it!"

"And deceive them?"

"Deceive nobody. I think the priests will come presently and offer you money for a service and for silence afterward. Accept the money, perform the service and keep silent.

"The priests will choose you because they already have a certain hold over you in the matter of your idiotic boasts about the dog and because you are the *diwan's* men, and they wish to make the *diwan* look ridiculous; moreover, because they know it is your business to draw the *diwan's* fish-nets before dawn, and there is no other crew available that might be trusted and that knows just where the *diwan's* fish-nets are."

"And the *sahib* will not turn his back on us afterward?"

"No. When the priests come, don't admit them to the house. Pretend there are women in there. Talk among these trees, so I may listen. When they have gone I will tell you whether it is safe or otherwise to carry out their orders. Go now, and caution the others."

Ommony moved back into the deepest shadow between the trees and the wall,

*Tiger.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

where an old, ill-smelling crate up-ended offered absolute concealment. He tested the crate a time or two to make sure it would not squeak under his weight and then crawled into it, sitting motionless like a fakir meditating. The dog-boy retreated down the alley and hid where there was no earthly risk of discovery.

Ommony's state of mind was the hunter's who, with all the resource at his command and vast experience of beasts' ways, has set a trap and sits to watch it. He knew the priests were in a quandary; knew they were alarmed at the news of Molyneux being on the way; was sure they were mystified by their belief that the *diwan* did not know Mrs. Craig's whereabouts; expected them to jump to conclusions, to which he had contributed by maneuvering the dog-boy; and he staked all on one shrewd guess, that the priests would be true to the past and, following the line of least resistance, try to compromise the *diwan* and absolve themselves in one stroke.

The risk was that it looked too easy. They might hesitate for just that reason. But there is always a risk, and if forestry is your religion you must be willing to take chances for it, going to the stake if necessary, blaming yourself for failure, adoring forestry for its success.

No Ananias holding back a sure thing for himself can win against the forces of reaction. For the sake of trees unborn, then, Ommony crouched in a filthy packing-case, chancing life, pension and preferment on one main with India's priesthood.

If he should fail—if there were insurrection—even if the priests' hand should be strengthened as the net result—he would have all the blame. If he should win there would be a forest where none had been, and for himself, in course, oblivion. He judged the scales fair enough, but wished he dared smoke; the mosquitoes tortured him.

IT WAS two hours after midnight—time enough to undergo the agonies of twenty times repeated fears—before the priests came; three, with Jannath in their midst. This time there was no ostentation; they came adroitly along the shadows where moonlight made splotches of dark purple hiding the pale-amber road.

The boatmen kept them waiting. There was maybe a conference within the hut, with some one holding out for a double-cross all round; but if so, single views prevailed. There followed altercation at the door, for the priests were unwilling to expose their persons any longer in the alley for the benefit of chance wayfarers. If there were truly women in there, let the women be driven forth.

Noise won that argument. The priests could not afford to wake the neighborhood, and yielded for the sake of silence.

So the boatmen all filed out, none yawning; there had evidently been excitement enough already to drive sleep out of their thoughts. They sat down in a group beneath the trees with the backs of the nearest not a yard from Ommony's lurking-place, and promptly the head boatman, acting spokesman for the group, dispensed with inessentials.

"Have you brought the money with you?"

"Yes, but there is work to do for it. The money must be earned."

"Such work as what, for instance?"

"Oh, a little work. No danger. Nothing to fear. A little, simple task. An act. A statement of the plain truth. And then no talking afterward."

"Speak plainly," said the boatman. "We be plain men, not priests."

"Fifty rupees for each of you!"

"Little enough!"

"Nothing to do but take this bundle of a woman's garments with you when you go to draw the *diwan's* nets. Open it at the nets. Throw the garments in the water. Leave them long enough to let the water soil them. Gather them again. Return; and if you should meet one of us at the wharfside, say, 'We found these in the water.' That is all."

"And what if the police should meet us?"

"Say the same thing."

"And if we are arrested?"

"You will not be. We promise that."

The promise was received in silence. From that negative comment the priests might draw such solace as they chose.

"We should be told the true reason for this," said the boatman after some reflection; but the veriest child would have recognized the bargain formula.

He wanted the money and was afraid the priests might hang back if he agreed too quickly. Jannath saw the point. There followed a chink of silver as a bag changed hands, and then more chinking and much muttered counting.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"We have not said we will leave the city!" the head boatman announced then with a note of triumph.

He considered he had scored, and sought to establish the fact.

"No need!" Jannath answered. "Lo, these two are witnesses. Ye have the money. If ye fail now, or if ye talk unwisely afterward; or if ye say aught except that ye found the woman's clothing in the *diwan's* nets, then this will be said against you—aye, and proven!—that ye told us where the garments are, and that we paid you to go and find them, because of a rumor that the woman has been carried off by priests."

"Even as we saw happen!" said the boatman, off-guard.

There was nearly a slip then! Ommony squirmed in his hiding-place. Jannath possibly had not quite realized the depth of the boatmen's conviction that they really were priests who had come to the hut for Elsa Craig.

All that saved the day was that the money had been passed and counted. It would hardly do to quarrel with the boatmen now and have them perhaps go hurrying to the *diwan* with their tale before steps could be taken to silence them forever.

"He who speaks rashly to his betters of things he does not understand is a fool without profit to himself or others," said Jannath sententiously, temporizing, seeking for a loop-hole; and the proverb opened it, for of all the wisdom-adoring East boatmen love proverbs best.

"We be plain men, seeking only money for our work," the boatman answered meekly.

"See to it that ye be plain men!" said Jannath, seizing on the man's mood. "See ye talk not! I can lay a curse on you that will kill—that will give no rest—that will bring you back to earth a worm in the belly of a dog—a fish—a tadpole—an insect in a dung-heap—a snake without fangs crawling in the slime—a vulture feeding in the cess-pits——"

"Peace!" said the boatman, grinding his teeth together. "Peace! Give a blessing!"

And the other boatmen clucked and grunted restlessly.

Jannath refrained. It may have been beneath his dignity to squander blessings on such common clay.

"Be careful! Obey in all particulars!" he sneered, and went away with his brother-priests on either side of him.

The boatmen sat still, watching them retreat cautiously along the shadows, saying nothing, feeling possibly the Judas-guilt of having traded honest watermanship for silver of the Sadducees. But Ommony crawled out of his box and stretched himself, yawning and then grinning. That changed the aspect of affairs.

"The *sahib* heard?"

"Heard everything. You nearly spoiled it."

"Shall we do this thing? What if——?"

"Obey the priests. Fulfil your bargain."

"What if——"

"I have told you. Then whatever happens, I'm your friend. If you're arrested you shall be released."

CHAPTER X

"To the Queen's taste!"

DAWN rose unlovely, yet so like preceding ones that only men in agony of mind for their inventions knew the difference. The morning colors were all there, the quiet, the dissipating dawn-wind bringing in sea-sweetness—an hour of cool relief between a breathless night and baking day, yet few to relish it. That city then was in no mood to be caressed.

Craig came to the veranda red-eyed with a headache, and eyed disgustedly the sloppy saucer with its cup of *chota hazri* tea awash with buffalo cream. He swallowed the stuff and gasped—denatured profanity.

Ommony came out, brusk as he often was at daybreak. The great gray hound that followed him sniffed half a dozen times upwind, read all there was to know, yawned and lay down disgustedly. Ommony looked at his teacup, dumped its contents over the veranda rail, and shouted for the *hamal*.

"*Chai!**" he demanded. "*Chai*, not dish-wash-water!"

He looked at Craig, who was pacing the corner like a schooner captain with the reckoning confused.

"How are you?" he demanded.

"Worried."

"Huh!"

Craig stared at him. He himself would have known how to be sympathetic if the cases were reversed. It dawned on him that this man might be worried, too—perhaps had not slept.

*Tea.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Mr. Ommony."

"What is it?"

Ommony paused in the act of lighting a pipe—in itself proof of nervousness to any one who knew him, he almost never smoked until the sun was over the high boughs.

"You are fortunate in that you have no wife to disappear in distracting circumstances, Mr. Ommony. We all have a cross to bear. I am glad for your sake your troubles are not as serious as mine."

"—— good of you!" said Ommony, recovering.

He rises to occasions like a war-horse, in the second stride. He had to manage this man. What was worse, he had to spare his feelings to the utmost, and yet did not dare admit him to the secret. He stuffed the unlighted pipe into his pocket.

"Your wife will be found, Craig."

"What makes you think so?"

"Intuition. Experience. I know these people."

"I'm afraid you don't know women. Mr. Ommony, I'm nearly off my head with self-reproach. Elsa was unhappy. A splendid, brave woman—out of her true environment.

"I'm sorry. The admission is forced from me. I have been unwilling to face the situation all these years; but last night, sleeping a little and dreaming of her, waking a great deal and turning it all over in my mind, I confessed to myself that Elsa has been bravely putting up a losing fight.

"Seven years without vacation. Too long, Mr. Ommony! Seven years in an environment unsuited to her. Never a complaint. Yet never any joy in her task—that true inner joy that makes willing martyrs of some of us.

"Your arrival on the scene somehow, in some way—I'm not imputing blame to you—brought her unhappiness to the surface. Mr. Ommony—I hate to say it—I——"

Ommony took his arm and paced the veranda beside him, saying nothing.

"—I fear suicide!"

"Impossible!" said Ommony.

"I regret to say, not impossible. Her grandmother——"

"Fiddlesticks!"

"Pardon me. Her grandmother took her own life."

"Fiddlesticks!"

Craig's grief was poignant. Ommony's dilemma was at least an equal torture. Unlike him, he began to hesitate. Had he a right to inflict such grief on this decent fellow? Did he dare let him into the secret? He decided to feel his way carefully.

"Suicide? What brings that to mind? Are you monkeying with thoughts of it yourself?"

Craig stopped and faced him.

"No, no, Mr. Ommony! A man's cross is his privilege. I will bear mine—bravely if I can. But if I cry out I will bear it. Elsa never cried out, until that first time when you heard her on the roof. I'm afraid—I'm afraid——"

"The fear's the hell," said Ommony. "Try faith."

"In my religion? I have faith."

"In her."

"Dread that she has taken her own life amounts almost to conviction."

"In me then. I believe she will be found alive and well."

Craig paused in the walk again and turned to look at Ommony with eyes fear-hardened, almost fanatic. They burned under the bushy eyebrows with that zeal that changes into frenzy.

"Are you drugging me, as you did last night? Do you mean to buoy me up with false hope?"

"I suggest you wait and see."

"It has crossed my mind that you and the *diwan* together are playing some deep game. With me? With my wife Elsa for a pawn, Mr. Ommony? If I thought that—if I believed it——"

"Come on. This will relieve the pressure at least. Let's sit down, and you tell what you'd do in an imaginary case like that. What would you do first?" Ommony suggested. "Let's suppose I——"

Craig refused to sit down. Taller than Ommony, he looked down into his eyes and laid one fevered, lean hand on the thick-set shoulder.

"I know you would play no such trick on me. You're not a heartless man. But if you did—and it were proven—I would never rest until I had you out of the service, you and the *diwan* both! You would not be fit for public trust!"

"You do believe in private vengeance then?"

"Not I. But I believe in duty. In such a case as you suppose duty would be as obvious as daylight. I would ruin you. I

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

would make it impossible for you ever to perpetrate such infamy again."

"You don't consider then that the public interest might override private feelings on occasion?"

"Not a fair question, Mr. Ommony! Think for a moment and you will realize it. On occasion, yes; in principle undoubtedly; in instances of this sort, never!

"Not only is it wrong to draw a missionary into politics, it's ten times over wrong to drag his wife in! I am forbidden by the terms of my agreement with the Indian Government to enter into politics in any way. To lend my wife to any scheme involving local politics would be unthinkable! However, why flog imaginary horses? We're talking foolishly."

"Yes, what's the use?" said Ommony and sat down, fingering his chin in discontent. Diana, aware of something wrong, got up and came to sniff the creases at the back of Craig's knees.

"Perhaps the dog could find her! Elsa! Where is she? Go find her!" Craig said suddenly.

The long tail waved response, but Diana, would take orders from none but two men and from one of those only when Ommony decreed it. She lay down, eyes on her master.

"She seems to understand! Mr. Ommony, send that dog to look for my wife—please!"

"We might do worse," he answered. "Di, go find her!"

The hound trotted off, stern down, broke into a canter on the driveway, bayed at the corner gate for a minute or two, then, none answering, turned and sprang over the stone wall at the third attempt. Craig's hands as he watched were trembling, opening and shutting.

"Man!" He turned to Ommony. "I hope! There's new hope born in me! Elsa went off with the dog! She saw your dog in the mission compound. She asked me to go on pitching the tent, and walked off to speak to the dog. She was always soft-hearted about animals. Your dog knows where she is—what happened to her— Oh, God! Let's hope——"

"Yes, let's hope," said Ommony, aware of new developments.

Craig with his head between his hands did not see the *diwan's* uniformed messenger coming up the driveway from the southern gate.

"The *diwan sahib* sends salaams, and will Ommony sahib please come immediately to the office?"

"I'll walk there with you," Craig announced. "Might be news; you never know."

Ommony could not refuse him, though he would have liked to. He dreaded what he knew was coming, knowing he would have his work cut out to manage the *diwan* and the priests without Craig on his hands in the bargain. It was a long walk to the *diwan's* office, and that was additional annoyance; he would have preferred to ride, but Craig for some reason objected to horseback, and he felt he owed Craig all the consideration possible.

SO IT was half an hour before they entered the courtyard of an ancient palace that had long ago been converted into suites of offices. There was bustle and activity, prevailing custom being to begin the day's business soon after dawn and close through the hot hours.

The courtyard was crowded. Some were the usual petitioners armed with screeds done by the public letter-writer, but the most were obvious partizans of the priests with the inevitable curious hangers-on.

"The High-Church Party," Ommony murmured, and Craig almost laughed.

There was no demonstration as they passed through the crowd, but none the less an atmosphere of insolent anticipation.

Up-stairs in the spacious place that once had been the royal durbar-hall the old *diwan* sat in an office chair before a great teak desk. Jannath, avid of high-priesthood and too proud to sit, stood erect a little to one side, and there were priests behind him. Over against them a policeman and two of the *diwan's* subordinates stood looking worried.

On the blotting-paper on the desk lay an ominous bundle covered with a piece of cloth. Hardly acknowledging Craig's bow or Ommony's spoken greeting, the *diwan* drew the cloth back.

"Can you identify these garments, Mr. Craig?"

Craig stepped forward. One look satisfied him. He covered the bundle with the cloth at once as if it were his wife's dead face.

"Yes, Elsa's. My wife's. Where were these found?"

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"In the water! In the *diwan's* fishing-nets!" said a small man from between two priests.

No priest himself, he had been brought to interpret, and as plainly enjoyed a chance to show spleen.

"By whom?" asked Craig.

"By the *diwan's* boatmen!" sneered the same assertive individual.

Craig turned to Ommony.

"I warned you I feared this," he said. Then—

"Has her body not been found?"

"No," said the *diwan*, looking miserable, avoiding Ommony's gaze.

"That," said the priests' interpreter, "is for obvious reasons!"

And Jannath signified approval of the speech by nodding three times gravely.

"What do you mean?" snapped Ommony.

He looked belligerent, as if it might be well to answer him.

"The clothes were found in the *diwan's* nets, and our contention is that the *diwan* is the author of the charge that this lady was kidnaped by the priests. We believe he knows who made away with her.

"The clothes were thrown into the water, and he hoped they would be found and used as evidence against us. But, you see—his own men found them in his own nets! And in further proof that he has guilty knowledge he has caused those boatman to be locked up where none can submit them to examination. They should be brought before a magistrate."

"Is all this true?" asked Ommony, as if every word of it were news to him.

Craig went and sat down on a chair in a corner with his head between his hands.

Jannath whispered. The interpreter nodded like a lawyer prompted from behind and resumed the attack.

"It is not only true, but we know it was by the *diwan's* orders she was killed! We know she was carried off in a covered cart by night. After that the *diwan* spread a tale that priests had done it. So when a man came and said a woman's clothes were in the waterway the priests paid the *diwan's* boatmen to go and look for them; and the boatmen told the truth to us——"

"That's more than you've told!" Ommony interrupted with a grin.

"Our point is that Craig memsahib is dead and that the priests are not responsible," said the interpreter, swallowing the insult. "The facts must be made public. There should be an investigation of the *diwan's* conduct——"

"Stop!"

THE amazing happened. Craig rose from his chair in the far corner and strode over to the desk, with his own grief thrust into the background and a fine compassion softening the hard lines of his face. He laid his right hand on the *diwan's* shoulder.

"I knew you would never be guilty of any such crime," he said simply. "During seven years that you and I have known each other you have been an honorable gentleman. I denounce the charges now made against you as unworthy."

The *diwan's* eyes were moist, and he could not speak. He glanced appealingly at Ommony.

"Good man, Craig!" said Ommony. "Wet clothes don't prove your wife's dead."

"The boatmen have told me, not one of them faltering, that it was priests who took her away," said the *diwan*, struggling with emotion. "They are locked up to prevent tampering with evidence. They will be kept so until Sir William Molyneux arrives, after which there shall be full inquiry. Craig sahib——"

"Yes."

Craig was discovering new iron in his character. He stood erect. The patience he had lavished on the mission bricks and mortar was forcing a new channel for itself, now the old was blocked.

"If I were you I would not lose heart," said the *diwan*.

"Not I!" Craig answered. "You may count on me to a conclusion. There is a motive. If these priests have made away with my wife for the purpose of discrediting you, they have us both to reckon with! I'm with you! I will not believe she is dead until it is proven. Let the whole city search for her! Offer a reward! Make it ample!"

The *diwan's* eyes met Ommony's and read prodigious satisfaction there.

"From my own purse," said the *diwan*, "I will offer at once a reward of rupees one thousand to whoever finds memsahib Craig."

"Alive," Craig added. "I'll contribute a thousand to that."

"Me too. A thousand," said Ommony quietly.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"There shall be a proclamation. Meanwhile," said the *diwan*, turning to the priests and speaking in their tongue, "the maharaja's troops will enforce the law against rioting. Even outside the temples there must be no assembly. I urge you before these witnesses to use your influence in keeping peace."

Jannath's puffy face for a moment lost its proud indifference. Black anger darkened it, and to Ommony's observing eyes the weakness of an underlying fear betrayed itself. Possibly the vision of high-priesthood was slipping away into the never-never land of useless dreams.

Then spite took hold, and Ommony, observing, scratched his chin. He made a signal to the *diwan*.

Stately, venerably, dignified, the *diwan* rose and left the room by a door at the rear. Ommony glanced at Craig, who hesitated, then knocked at the *diwan's* private door and followed him in.

He caught Jannath's eye. Jannath stood still. He looked straight and curiously at the *diwan's* subordinates and the policeman; they excused themselves, mumbling this and that reason for retreating by the front way.

"We're not alone yet," said Ommony in the native tongue, smiling at Jannath dryly.

Jannath's face did not move. He was thinking furiously behind the mask. Every one of his entourage except the little restless rat of an interpreter was doing the same thing, like a group of graven images. The little man glanced sharply from face to face, alert for his cue.

Jannath muttered something. All except the interpreter walked out through the front door, and the doorkeeper closed it from the outside.

"We are not alone yet!" remarked Ommony.

Jannath's face remained perfectly expressionless. Not even the shark eyes betrayed the least emotion. He was mastering thought again, unlike Ommony, who was its servant, choosing between good and bad, wisdom and unwisdom, letting intuition lead him. At the end of a minute Jannath spoke again, and the interpreter followed the others out by the front door.

Ommony looked under the desk—out along the ledge below the windows—behind the big wall-map—into a cupboard partly filled with stationery—behind a screen in a corner.

"We're alone," he remarked.

"You are an evil man—a foreigner without right here," said Jannath.

"That's a question of opinion. Time presses. We should talk of facts," Ommony answered.

Then he baited his hook shrewdly and cast warily.

"I have you beaten," he said with an air of superwisdom.

None more readily than Jannath would have scorned a mere show of diplomatic trumps. But an air of superwisdom was something that Brahman could not tolerate. His lip curled. Ommony looked wiser than before and sat down.

"I've outwitted you," he told him, and the priest's thin smile grew vague as he dallied with a dozen thoughts of how to overcome this boaster.

"Sir William Molyneux will come and will demand memsahib Craig alive at the hands of you priests," said Ommony. "I know all about the boatmen. I was there listening when you came last night and paid them fifty rupees each. I overheard every word you said."

A look of astonishment, almost incredulity, escaped the priest's control; but it was gone in a second.

"Parumpadpa will be in a tight place, won't he!" said Ommony dryly. "Now if Parumpadpa had been wise enough to yield in the matter of the revenue from cut trees all this might have been avoided—mightn't it?"

The glare of an insane ambition leapt into Jannath's eyes. He almost gave assent, but checked himself.

"Parumpadpa has betrayed his office. Why don't you act sensibly and hand over Mrs. Craig?" asked Ommony.

"You know I don't know where she is!" sneered Jannath.

Ommony was no such fool as to admit his own knowledge, nor to enter into any bargain with an utterly relentless enemy. Fish catch themselves. That is the angler's whole art, making it look tempting to the fish to do so.

"If I could have my way about the trees I might—perhaps—put information in your way, that——"

Enough! The hook went home.

"I will *not* treat with you about the revenue from trees," said Jannath, and his eyes assumed that insolent, inscrutable,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

superior stare that advertises treason in high places.

Outwitted? He had Ommony tricked two ways! He proceeded to emit a smoke-screen for his further confusion.

"Neither you nor I know where she is—nor any one! You are an impudent imposter!"

He drew his white garments, symbolical of purity, about him and without another glance in Ommony's direction walked out, prefiguring high-priesthood in his stride. The door slammed at his back, and after a minute the *diwan* came in through the other door.

"What happened?" he asked.

"I hooked him!"

"The danger is that the priests will arouse the mob. They may think that by killing Sir William Molyneux——"

"No fear now," laughed Ommony. "Jannath thinks he has the whole solution in his own head. He'll restrain the others until Brass-Face gets here. I've managed to fool him."

"How?"

"To the Queen's taste!" answered Ommony, who keeps in his inner man a quite peculiar regard for the late, by him for one lamented, Queen Victoria.

CHAPTER XI

"Think it over!"

THAT afternoon Ommony strolled down the winding street that leads by the Temple of Siva. The city was strangely quiet, lulled into an ominous unrest and doing nothing while it waited for the gods to make the next move within a day or two. That was what the priests had recommended busily since less than an hour after Jannath's interview with Ommony.

In the temple portico stood Jannath, talking to his sycophants. He had stood there for an hour, since a spy brought word that Ommony was on the prowl; but Ommony, not knowing of that spy and only aware of another one who dogged him, took great pains to call attention to himself, examining old carvings on walls and doorposts all along the street. He appeared not to see Jannath, but continued his inspection of antiquities in that aggravating, superciliously interested way that white men have when they hope to prove they are not Philistines.

The moment he caught sight of him Jannath stepped into the shadow and slunk thence into the gloom inside the temple door. He watched. It was nearly five o'clock, so Ommony was very clearly outlined against house walls by the westering sun. A man with a carbine hidden under his cotton cloak stepped up beside the priest and showed the muzzle end suggestively, but Jannath shook his head.

"Leave this to me," he said, dropping his lower lip until all the small, betel-stained teeth showed.

There was no objection to that. It was known Parumpadpa had imposed on Jannath the problem of confounding Ommony, and suspected that the job was more than usually risky—well understood, too, that Jannath was ambitious, and remembered against him that by jealous habit he would bite the hand that helped him to success.

Jannath desired no witnesses. He beckoned off the spy who was dogging Ommony about the city, and gave orders none was to follow himself. Then when Ommony turned a corner out of sight Jannath set out alone in pursuit.

The sycophants laughed.

"So much he thinks of dignity!" sneered some one. "Is it possible to think of Parumpadpa acting thus?"

And they sat down in the cool shade of the portico to gossip of the two men, taking sides, not sparing either. Ommony, with one of those small mirrors in his hand that women carry in vanity bags in public, began to hurry. Soon after Jannath turned the corner behind him he pulled out his watch and made a gesture of alarm.

Thereafter Jannath had to put best foot forward, aping dignity how he might, while Ommony grinned to himself, as hard as nails from perpetual exercise. He had a notion to tire his hooked fish early in the game, and no idea of the extent of Jannath's forethought. As they passed a great old archway that gave on to a stable-yard an *ekka** drawn by a lean, dun pony came bumping out over the cobbles and followed the priest at a respectful distance.

So, though Jannath was blown and angry, he consoled himself when Ommony at last reached the clump of trees near the *diwan's* office where he had tethered his horse. There was a mattress full length of the *ekka*, and a cover stretched over it on

* *Ekka*—A two-wheeled conveyance drawn by one horse.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

iron hoops. The priest climbed in, and lay full length.

Maybe the *diwan* saw through the window. Some one from the *diwan's* office brought what might have been a map and handed it to Ommony, who studied it for a minute or two, sitting horseback so that the sun might shine from behind him over his shoulder.

Then, shoving the map, if it was that, into his pocket he rode away. The *ekka* followed, the pony loping to keep up, and if Jannath did not grow seasick from the pitching it must have been because he had been a sailor in a recent incarnation.

Ommony set the pace just fast enough to keep the pony loping and its passenger worried. Time for undisturbed reflection might make Jannath reconsider his course, because, to put it mildly, it was risky and *infra dig* for a priest to do his own out-of-town espionage. There were obedient and reverent devotees by the score who would do that kind of thing for almost nothing.

But once more Ommony had banked on the inevitable. Pickpockets, footpads, common cheats and all the small fish hunt in schools. Big fish, aiming to supplant the biggest, stand or fall alone. They must. They know too much of their own treason to dare employ an underling who might betray.

If Parumpadpa were to learn that Jannath thought he held a key to the mystery, that key would have to be explained in council, or at very least in the high priest's private ear, and gone would be all hope of Jannath's using it for his own ends.

On the face of it Ommony's moves might seem connected up with gossamer that the slightest accident would break. In fact he was depending on known habits of his quarry, such as fishermen and hunters use. The only risk now was that Jannath might grow fearful on account of distance.

Even the document sent down from the *diwan's* office was a ruse. Ommony needed no map. He had had full directions from the *diwan*, and his woodsman's head retained that sort of information as some minds remember limericks.

There is art in being hunted as in hunting. It required that touch of suggestion to make Jannath think perhaps Ommony was not quite sure of the way—a strong incentive to pursuit; ask any hunter—and to heighten conviction that the *diwan*, too, knew where Elsa Craig was hidden.

Two pigeons to one shot! If Jannath could discover her, use that information for his own ends and also convict the *diwan*, he was a made high priest! The only course left open then for Parumpadpa would be to resign, adopt the begging-bowl and wander for his soul's sake.

"High time!" thought Jannath, lying on his elbows, holding his chin in both hands to offset jarring, and worrying the *ekka's* driver with lay advice as to how to keep the horseman in view.

Ommony, holding that small mirror in his fist, had no need to look behind him until darkness fell. Then, in the short, fast deepening twilight he made believe there was a stone in his horse's shoe, and so let the priest catch up.

When night fell, and no moon yet, he lighted a cigar and let the glow of that serve for navigating-light, for there were no roads, only cart-trails leading between field and field with the farmer folk's small fires aglow at intervals.

The wonder of it was that Ommony with only the *diwan's* verbal outline and perhaps a map illegible in darkness, could lead unerringly. Life in the forests adds that gift to a man's own birthright—that or, if he has no birthright, makes a beast of him.

They splashed through fords. The priest in the *ekka* made nothing of the fact that Ommony did not look round or wait to see who followed; white men act, so, riding up and down the land all-ignorant of what is in it for the sake of a, to them, agreeable aloofness—white men and priests. The rest wonder, waiting on Karma, the Law of Cause and Effect that compensates all errors in the end.

"He's as selfish and blind and exclusive as all other white men," thought Jannath. "Truly, whom the gods intend to ruin they insert into a white skin!"

He, too, believed in Karma, but you have to do a lot more than believe in it to profit by its absolute precision.

There was one incident that might have given Jannath an inkling that he was fish, not fisherman. The *ekka* wheels stuck between stones in a ford, and Ommony waited while driver and priest got down knee-deep in the muddy stream to lift the wheel clear. He could not afford to let them lose sight of him.

A new cigar was the excuse, but if the priest had thought at all he might have

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

known that the first one was hardly half-finished. Truly, whom the gods intend to ruin they make eager, and ambitious, and too sure of their own cleverness.

NOT long after that the moon rose and Ommony increased the distance between them, satisfied that he was silhouetted against the enormous amber lantern of the sky. He could hear the *crack-crack-crack* of a stick on the wearying dun and put his own horse to a canter presently, for he saw an outline etched with moonlight that answered a description. It was nearly time to land his fish.

He was a long half-mile in the lead when he came to an ancient gate under an almost prehistoric arch, above whose gloom great trees stood luminous in the moon's rays—but too far within the wall to be of use to intruders. He struck on the gate a dozen times with the butt end of a riding-whip and then called out a dozen words that the *diwan* had entrusted to him. They acted like, "Open, sesame!"

There was an answer from within, and the door swung open about an inch for an eye to peer through. Then it shut tight.

Ommony's voice had accomplished more than one thing. Out of the dark along the shadow of the wall a great beast bigger than a wolf came in ten-foot leaps and landed in front of the saddle, like a devil out of Scripture on Ommony's lap!

"Down, Di! Down!"

Diana licked his face and whined and wriggled like a puppy, leaped to the ground again and sprang back; then, when Ommony dismounted, lay down to have her feet felt over in the dark for thorns. Ommony pulled two. There was no hurry.

The noise of the dun pony's cantering had ceased. Jannath had dispensed with the *ekka* now, lest the driver share his information, and was coming forward on foot.

Ommony calmed the dog's excitement; just one of her rare, exultant barks might have spoiled everything. Then with her muzzle in his hand to make sure he knocked on the gate again.

Once more it opened about an inch. He spoke through it, and shoved in a sheet of paper that bore the *diwan's* seal. An old voice answered him:

"*Sahib*, beware! There is a great beast that none ever saw before. He—she—it is a female—has besieged this gate since morning. I am fearful——"

"That's all right. I'm a tamer of such beasts. This one is sent by the gods to do the *diwan's* bidding. See—I hold her with one hand!

"Now listen: Close the gate. Wait there. When I knock again three times, open it wide! But if I speak when I knock, don't open it!"

There was no appeal beyond the *diwan's* orders over his seal and signature. The old man grumbled an affirmative. The gate closed tight, and one bolt clanged in place.

Ommony faced about to school Diana, whose fault now was eagerness. She was willing to go forth and conquer—even to lie down and keep still, if only Ommony were close at hand. But he planned division of effort and did not dare raise his voice. It was a stick that made her understand at last. She went and lay watching where he told her to.

Ommony stayed at the gate, not still but moving up and down impatiently, ascending and descending the brick steps, pacing irritably to and from in front of it, ascending again to strike on the gate and demand admission in the proper manner of a *sahib* who can't wake the gateman.

"I tell you I've the *diwan sahib's* authority! Open, do you hear me!" he shouted.

Once he had to whisper, for the old man was alarmed and wondered what it all might mean—whether he had his orders right or had perhaps mistaken them. But only Jannath was mistaken. He came nearer—much too near. He had a dagger in his hand, contending there was no least need for Ommony in this world when once the secret of Elsa Craig's whereabouts should be betrayed beyond all question.

Jannath avoided moonlight, kicked off his sandals, crept so close he hardly dared breathe for fear of discovering himself—came closer—nearly trod on something in the dark that moved away an inch or two—and felt the goose-flesh rise as an unseen creature sniffed his leg! He raised the dagger instinctively. Moonlight glinted on the blade.

"Down him, Di!" Ommony yelled, and sprang too, to save the dog's life.

No need! Diana was as sudden as a mine exploded under the feet of scouts in no man's land. The priest's heel caught in

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

a root of undegrowth and he went down backward with a thump.

"Hold him!" yelled Ommony.

When he reached the place at a run the priest was on knees and one hand, swiping right and left with the dagger and gibbering obscenity, Diana growling and dancing this and that way with jaws going like castanets to keep him where he was. Ommony sent the dagger spinning with a blow of the riding-whip and caught the priest's leg, turning him over on his back, where he lay still, breathing through his nose. There was very little said. Ommony said all of it.

"Get up! Hands above your head! Now walk in front of me! That way!"

Jannath obeyed, much less afraid of Ommony than of the dog, who growled at his heels. Long intimacy with the tricks to which men easily succumb makes Jannath's kind complacent in the presence of *force majeure*. They know too many subtle ways of turning force against itself. But a dog is a different matter. The corners of Jannath's eyes were on Diana's teeth, not Ommony's riding-whip.

Not speaking, Ommony struck three times on the gate. The bolt came clanging back. The gate opened half-timidly, as if the very wood had grown unused to intrusion.

"Forward!" Ommony commanded; and Diana went in first to make sure there were no traps for her master.

Instantly the priest switched round like an eel, aiming at Ommony's eyes with the heels of both hands, with all his might. Ommony stepped back, and the closing door caught him between the shoulder-blades.

The double blow missed, but Jannath was behind it with another dagger snatched from inside his clothes, and again Diana saved the night. She heard and, swerving like a wolf, snapped hold of the dagger-wrist before the blade could quite touch Ommony.

The priest screamed, for the fangs bit bone. Ommony relieved him of the dagger and then ordered the dog to let go. The old gate-keeper, trembling as he barred the gate, gave tongue to his displeasure.

"But this is all unseemliness. Here should be peace! No strife! No quarreling! The *diwan sahib*——"

"Desires this!" Ommony interrupted. "Now! Where's a safe place to lock this man up?"

"All is safe here, *sahib*. None can enter, none escape."

"I'll wager the rats get in and out. This priest is twice as smart! Show me a place with no window and a floor he can't dig through with his fingers!"

The old man led the way down a path between shrubbery and flowers to a stone hut shaped like a little wayside temple. It was full of gardeners' tools. Ommony pulled them all out, piling them in confusion on the path, and asked the old man to bring water "in something he can't use to dig a hole with." Then he spoke to Jannath.

"You're a Brahman. Shall I dress that wrist for you?"

The laws of caste are iron—the higher, the more rigid. Jannath hesitated. He was afraid of dog-bites.

"All right, think it over," said Ommony. "I'll think too," he added, grinning.

Then he shut the priest in along with a bowl of water the old man brought, padlocked the thick door himself, and put the key into his pocket.

"The *memsahib?* You came to see her?"

"Presently," said Ommony. "Take her my compliments. Ask her to be ready to receive a *sahib*. Let me out first. I must go out and return."

OUTSIDE he set Diana quartering the ground, for he guessed the priest had not come all that way barefooted. One pair of sandals looks much like the next, but there are significant small differences, and the very last thing he wanted was a hue and cry.

Diana found them, and he put them in his pocket. Then he mounted his horse and set out to find the *ekka* and its driver—nearly lost both, for the dun believed Diana was a wolf and the driver agreed with her. They went a mile before he overhauled them.

"Back with you!" he ordered. "Drive on till you come to a gate in a wall!"

The driver obeyed, but he was wild-eyed. Once he made a jump for freedom, but Diana caught him, and Ommony threw him back into the *ekka* by the loin-cloth. After that he began to proclaim virtue, denouncing all wicked men and calling no less than Ganesha to witness that he never in his life harmed any one.

Why was the *sahib* taking him, and where? He had done no wrong. For a very

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

low price he had driven Jannath the priest——"

That was all Ommony needed to know. He knew the priest's name. Lock and key for him!

They came to the ancient gate, and over the old man's protests hauled the *ekka* up the brick steps and under the arch. Then Ommony brought his own horse in.

"But this is unheard of!" the old man objected. "Never were wheels or a horse in this place! Never in *her* day—never since then! It was *her* wish, and the *diwan sahib*——"

"Gave me full permission," Ommony assured him.

"It is sacrilege!"

"Leave the *ekka* here under the rock. Stable the horses somewhere. Have you any grain?"

Grain was produced. There were sacks full kept for the wild birds beloved of the *diwan's* wife. Room was discovered for the horses in a shed beside the granary, and the driver of the *ekka* was shut in there along with them. Then Ommony returned to Jannath, having begged first from the old gate-keeper aromatic oil, which is never far out of reach in India.

"He will refuse it. He will say his caste forbids," the gateman grumbled, but Ommony was in no mind to be refused.

He found Jannath glowering like Marius in a dungeon.

"Now," he began, "suppose I dress your wrist and we'll be friendly."

Jannath cursed him without emphasis because no fraction of the curse was less emphatic than the rest. Ommony seized the injured wrist and washed it while the priest, not otherwise protesting, went on with the commination service. Ommony tore a long strip from the priest's own clothing, soaked it thoroughly in aromatic oil and bound it on.

"You will be a sow when the time comes!" Jannath assured him calmly.

"Maybe. I'll try to be a good sow and bring forth prodigies of young! Is the wrist comfortable?"

Jannath refused to answer. It was enough that he had submitted to defilement by a foreigner. He was certainly not going to acknowledge obligation to the impudent beast from oversea, who had done no more than dress an injury committed by his own dog.

"Listen to me!" said Ommony. "You came to find out where memsahib Craig is."

The priest became suddenly alert.

"Incidentally to kill me."

The shark eyes gleamed in the gloom of the cell, but there was no response.

"What if I show memsahib Craig to you alive and well? What then?"

As well argue with a mummy about metaphysics! Jannath was intensely interested; that much was as obvious as the malicious leer, and the hate in his motionless eyes.

"Um-m-m! If I were to kick you," said Ommony aloud to himself in English, "that might only awaken the lust for martyrdom that's in the veins of all your kind."

Then to the priest in the other language:

"You're defiled already. You may as well wallow in defilement. Why not come to terms with me? You can wipe it all out together afterward in one course of holy disinfection in the temple!"

No reply—but a change behind the trustless eyes. Unyielding, Jannath was alert for opportunity.

"I'll admit to you I'm in a mess," said Ommony. "It never crossed my mind to use violence toward a sacred personage. How should I have known who you were? But here we are, and I've done it! What now? In one sense you're at my mercy, but you know quite well I won't kill you, so in another sense I'm at yours. We've got to get you out of this without involving me if possible. You understand?"

He did, for that was something Jannath could appreciate. The law of action and reaction as applied to evil was his life-long study. As the tides flow and the moon wanes, there is always repercussion in affairs of men, victors in their turn becoming vanquished and all plans being riddled full of flaws because of human lack of foresight. He would now resume where he had left off. Were the gods not with him?

"The Government is obliged to protect priests," he said acidly.

"Of course. That's what Government's for."

Jannath almost let a smile escape him. This was absolutely typical of an Englishman, making a bluff for days on end at being subtle and then becoming as transparent as a child!

"I shall do nothing," he announced with an air of finality.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Nothing tonight," Ommony agreed sarcastically. "Tomorrow, though, unless I've come to terms with you I'll go to Parumpadpa and——"

Jannath betrayed alarm. His eyes narrowed. He shrugged himself as if stung.

"—and I'll tell Parumpadpa the whole story," Ommony continued. "Parumpadpa might not excuse *me*—but at least he will make a laughing-stock and an example out of *you!* Think it over," he added, and walked out, padlocking the door behind him.

HE CHUCKLED as he found his way back to the gate and hardly grew serious until the old gatekeeper led him to within eyeshot of the Home of Peace where Elsa was installed. There another old man greeted him respectfully and led the way up the marble steps, on which the lightest footfall sounded like rank impropriety.

Ommony became aware that he was walking like a cat and smiled at himself. No humility was likely to serve much in the next few minutes. Thorough! That would have to be the keynote of the next tune, and he hated it, but let his heels ring on the marble and went up thenceforth boldly.

"Mr. Ommony?"

Elsa in the clinging draperies of India stood before him in a doorway, looking like a goddess, feeling as if she were in night attire.

"They said, 'The *sahib*.' I felt sure it was my husband. You mustn't see me like this."

"I've seen you," said Ommony.

Her detestation of the man revived and flooded her thoughts. Too surely he had seen her, and seen through her! The basis of their enmity!

"What do you want?" she demanded.

"Your help."

"At this hour? Where's my husband?"

"He's all right. He slept last night in the guest-house with me."

"Does he know where I am?"

"No. He's badly worried, but behaving like a man."

"Why don't you tell him where I am?"

Ommony's reply was truthful literally, if evasive.

"The dog traced you here. I came to find the dog. The man at the gate admitted me after some argument."

"The dog? Diana? She found me? Where is she? Bless her heart!"

Ommony whistled, and Diana came out of the shadows, where she was studying history with her nose to earth. At sight of Elsa Craig she threw her head up and bayed, all golden in the moonlight.

"She's hungry," Ommony said cunningly. "Have you anything she can eat?"

He had divined the password!

"Come!" she called to the dog, and Ommony went on up with Diana.

When Elsa returned from a *hinterland* of old women and cooking-pots with a great bowl nearly full of cooked rice, Ommony was seated on an ebony chair in the marble hallway. Elsa draped herself in a cashmere shawl and stood in the doorway against the full moon, watching Diana eat.

"May I smoke?" asked Ommony, craving something commonplace to bring them both down to earth.

"What happens next?" she answered, not caring whether he smoked or not.

She had small use for him, and showed it in her manner.

"I smoke," he said genially and pulled out a cigar.

She watched him light it, he being at great pains to appear at ease.

"Do you propose to spend the night here?"

"Not for fifty rajas' ransoms! I propose to talk to you and ride a tired horse back."

"Have you eaten since morning?" she asked.

"Why, no. It was nice of you to think of that."

Having thought of it, she had to feed him. One of the old women was requested to put food before him in the dining-room. Elsa at last had recognized a quality she liked, and was quick enough to comment on it.

"So you thought of the dog first?"

"No, the horse. I'm next. The priest comes last."

"What priest?"

"Jannath. He was outside, trying to get in. I let him in. He had a dagger. The priests have said you're dead, and are trying to prove it. Here's one of Jannath's daggers."

He pulled the thing out of his pocket and showed it to her."

"He's in the tool-shed now, considering new sins."

"Are you sure he's in there?"

"Perfectly. I have the key."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"But there are tools in there."

"No. I removed them."

"Heavens, Mr. Ommony! I wonder what all this means."

"So do I," he answered. "It means one of two things—trees or treason. Either I grow trees—a million of them—or you commit treason to yourself, your sex, your race, your husband and the world! We've got to understand each other."

"Then kindly don't talk in riddles!"

"I'm a plain man," he answered. "You're the riddle. Would you rather snub me because I didn't pretend to like your John Ishmittee—or help me defeat Parumpadpa?'

"To what end?"

"Trees!" he answered, knocking ash from his cigar. "You were at the bottom of this tree business," he went on. "Do you care to see it through?"

She leaned back against the door-post for she felt hot temper rising and herself not strong enough to battle with it. But she looked amazing with the moon's rays silvering her outline and the edges of her hair.

"See it through? And *I'm* at the bottom of it! Mr. Ommony, you thought you saw through me that first morning when you came to breakfast. You——"

"I recognized your courage," he interrupted. "I was sorry——"

"What *right* had you to be sorry for me?" she burst in, grinding her heel on the marble threshhold.

"None. I was sorry to see courage wasted."

"Wasted? Our mission——"

"Wasted in a losing struggle with the Hindu priests. But, you know, you can't help people who defy you from the word Go. Now I need *your* help badly," he added, judging he had stood on the defensive long enough.

And Elsa did not answer, but stood wondering with her face toward the moonlight, until the old woman came and said food was ready.

CHAPTER XII

"How's the situation?" "Ticklish!"

ELSA did not sit down facing Ommony across the buhlwork dining-table as he suggested; that would have looked too much like a signature of peace. There was none. Peace had vanished from the tranquil place.

But her thoughts had undergone a great change in the night and a day she had spent there. She went to the seat in the great square window looking out on moonlight shimmering among the lotus-leaves and sat there rigid; but she was conscious of a weakness in her own attitude, and not so sure of the impudence in Ommony's. After all, what had the man done to her? And was he not there offering protection and requesting her help?

"What do you want me to do?" she asked presently.

"Nothing you don't care to do," said Ommony. "I can manage natives usually, but I wouldn't interfere with your judgment."

"It wouldn't pay you. What then?"

He finished eating very deliberately, and turned his chair so as to face her.

"My sympathy for your mission is about on a par with your sympathy for me. I don't pretend to any. But I like Craig. He's a man, and he's entitled to his own opinions and their product. He believes in his mission, and I'll help him as far as I can without surrendering my own judgment. My job is to provide trees for the generations that will follow us; and there we're on common ground, for the priests are against your mission and against me.

"Prejudice and all that sort of thing aside, and conceding to the Hindu priests a right to their own viewpoint, we've got to defeat them before either your mission or my trees have a ghost of a chance.

"We can't defeat them in the open, because they fight underground. Their weakness is in mutual mistrust. So is ours. Now what about it?"

"What can *I* do?"

"You can postpone your chastisement of me, for one thing, until we haven't an enemy in common who needs our undivided attention."

She smiled in spite of herself, aware that she did not dislike him so much as she had thought.

"Very well, we will postpone our enmity."

"That's thoroughly agreeable to me. The other thing I'll ask you to do is to let me play this hand and to obey my orders implicitly. You'll need courage——"

"I think I don't lack that."

He decided courage was a sympathetic chord and harped on it, reminding her at long length that the white man's chance in

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

India had always hung as much on women's bravery as on any other factor. He even mentioned Lucknow and the Mutiny, and talked of the wives who wilt beside their husbands in the fever districts.

"Tell me your plan," she demanded after a while, and he unfolded it while she thrilled and trembled alternately.

"You understand," he said finally, "there's a chance you may not come alive through this. There's an equally strong chance that I may be broke forever for it; and if they kill you, they'll probably kill me and all of us. We've got to win or take the consequences standing. Are you game?"

She nodded.

"But my husband? How much does he know?"

"Nothing. He would never have agreed. He has acted splendidly. Left to follow his own course he has been a prodigious help, but he would go up in the air at once if he knew the part you are to play. When he learns the whole truth he will probably denounce me for a scoundrel. He would never let you do it if he——"

"I will do it," she interrupted, drumming with her fingers on the window-sill, and Ommony did not disguise his smile of triumph.

"You'll make a dangerous opponent when the time comes to resume your enmity with me," he assured her.

Thereafter he wasted no time, but got to horse and with Diana cantering beside him splashed through the fords on the way back, hoping against hope to reach the quay before the maharaja's motor-boat could come with Molyneux.

Hope was confirmed. He had to wait, with the horse dripping sweat and the hound asleep, until an hour before dawn, hearing the *thug* of the approaching motor miles away and observant that a dozen priests, who waited in a group near by, had no boat in which to put out and obtain first audience. The *diwan's* representative, who came at the last minute, saluted cordially, but it was even his place to wait until Ommony, as acting substitute for the British resident, should have tendered the first greetings.

So, though the priests pressed close, it was Ommony who blocked the gangway, and he who stepped down into the launch, awakening Sir William Molyneux, who slept the sleep of all God-fearing, unimaginative men.

"D'YOU mind backing out again, sir? We can talk unheard in midstream."

"Bet your last rupee! How's poor old Gould? Spiffy boat this—Tottenham Court Road cushions—slept all the way down."

"Gould's in the hands of the maharaja's court physician. The priests are waiting on the quay to get your private ear."

"Want to confess me, eh? Well, that's premature. By gad, sir, I'm not nearly on my last legs. How's the situation?"

"Ticklish."

"Found the missionary lady yet?"

"I know where she is."

"Why not pounce on her and pull the plug?"

"Didn't care to act prematurely. Needed you to use your well-known discretion in such matters. The priests daren't kill her——"

"*What?* Those rascals have her, and you——"

"Half a minute! Thought you might take better advantage of the situation. You'll find she's in Siva's temple. Tomorrow—no, by Jove, today; there's the false dawn!—this evening there's a temple ceremony—feast of the full moon.

"They'll be at their wits' end what to do with her. I have the information. They admit the crowd at sunset. Meanwhile, you might commit the priests to a statement, preferably in writing, that they haven't got Mrs. Craig. Then if you demand admission to the temple, say an hour before the crowd's due, and find her in there——"

"Yes," said Molyneux, "that sounds like common-sense. Are you sure she's safe meanwhile?"

"Reasonably sure. My informant had word with her during the night. She seems to be comfortable, and not put to indignity."

"But she's a lady! She must be suffering the tortures of the damned! These missionaries are a nervous lot, you know, Ommony. We ought to take that in consideration."

"Mrs. Craig is a plucky woman."

"Well, I'll take your word for it. So you think I should be a bit stand-offish with these priests?"

"I would gain time if I were you, sir."

The launch put back to the quay, and Sir William Molyneux stepped out to shake hands with the *diwan's* representative.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

But almost before the usual courtesies were over that deferent individual was thrust aside by a dozen others in the white robes of their office, who pushed forward a little narrow-faced man as interpreter.

"Sir William Molyneux——"

"That is my name, sir."

"That man——"

"Why don't you name him? Which man?"

"Mr. Ommony and the *diwan* have accused——"

He stopped. Molyneux had not been nicknamed Brass-Face without reason. The sight of his jaw alone would have stricken fear into a prize-fighter. When he frowned the brows came down over the normally good-natured eyes, and a thick, untidy crop of hair considerably shot with iron-gray increased the effect. It was growing dawn, and though a light mist moved on the early wind each line and contour of the bold face was discernible.

"Your *diwan* has the name of an honorable gentleman. I'm not here to listen to tales against him," he interrupted sternly.

"But, sir, he——"

"I will present my credentials to the *diwan* after breakfast. At the proper time, if he agrees, I may be willing to hear both sides to any dispute between you. I bid you good morning!"

They drew off, showing their resentment in every way they could, including remarks in their own language intended for his ear.

"—— them!" exclaimed Molyneux. "I'd rather be friendly than tread on their corns. Can't they understand that? If there's anything I hate it's being rude without excuse. Confound them, why do they force it on me? I've a sincere respect for priests of all religions, Ommony. If my advice is not impertinent, I'd say— Hullo! Where did you get that stunning stag-hound?"

Diana made friends, and with the *diwan's* representative beside them for the sake of the amenities they walked to the guest-house for breakfast, Molyneux postponing taking over the residency until, as he expressed it, "the confounded stable's clean. By gad, sir, I can smell that poor chap's drugs from here!"

He walked, as his conversation was, downrightly, not avoiding puddles left by the city *bhistis*,* nor hurrying unduly, looking about him to admire the sights and distributing uncounted small coins to the beggars, who were up betimes for lack of luxury and aware of a generous man from long, long practise.

"Might be you and me, you know. Do you believe in all this reincarnation stuff? By gad, if I should be a beggar in the next life for my sins I'd hate to be refused an alms. Have you any more small change, Ommony?"

They breakfasted along with tales of hunting in the Dekkan, sniping in the gray mist up by Dera Ismail Khan, tiger-shooting in the Assam jungle and above all snipe.

"I'd rather shoot snipe, my boy, than go to Windsor!"

All things were met downrightly by Molyneux, and each in turn, including poached eggs. Business and the *diwan* would come presently.

"We're young, you know. He's on in years. Let's not hustle the old gentleman. Where's Craig? Is there any means of smuggling comforts in to Mrs. Craig? Too risky? ——! I hate to leave a woman in a predicament. Are you sure she's in no immediate danger, Ommony?"

CRAIG came in, and Molyneux met that emergency with customary frankness.

"So you missionaries have been playing politics, eh? Don't deny it, sir! Don't deny it! Let this be a lesson to you —— me! Will you ever learn, though?

"Well, so Mrs. Craig is missing, eh? And Ommony tells me you've acted like a man. That's good. That shows guts. We'll find her for you.

"Do you smoke? Drink? Chew tobacco? Swear? No? Well, that's right. I like a man who lives up to his convictions. I do 'em all myself; found chewing a great relief up north after Ovis Ammon—great rocks, you know, and leagues on end without a dram of water. Ever hunt? No? Well, each man to his taste."

That situation well met, he dismissed Craig from his calculations, and apparently from memory. It was time to visit the *diwan* before there was any mention of the plan to rescue Mrs. Craig. As they started to leave for the office Craig put the question—"What do you propose to do?"

"Not much notion yet, sir. Why talk

* Water-carriers who sprinkle the streets from goatskin water-bags.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

behind the *diwan's* back? The man's an honorable gentleman. He'll do the right thing certainly."

Craig remained at the guest-house, none too confident, his head between his hands in the chair on the veranda.

Downright and all above-board, Molyneux strode into the *diwan's* office and refused to let the old man rise to greet him.

"Always glad to be of service to a man of your distinction, sir! I take it you're a mainspring of the State and I'm an oil-can? Eh? Now what's the difficulty? Priests, they tell me, and a missionary lady. Any plans?"

The *diwan* looked appealingly at Ommony, who had promised to bear the brunt and take all risks. So Ommony broke in.

"How much do you want to know, Sir William?"

"—— me! All there is to know. What else?"

"Do you wish to override the *diwan?*"

"No sir. What the —— d'ye mean?"

"The *diwan* naturally knows the ins and outs of all this business. I've helped him at his request. The thing's involved, and unless you wish to override him he prefers, and I agree with him, to handle the underground end, if backed up in the open by your prestige. He doesn't like the idea of your becoming involved behind the scenes in any intrigue between him and the priests——"

"Ha-ha! Intrigue? Me? I never saw the use of it! So you and his honor the *diwan* have a little plan all cooked between you? Eh? Well——"

He pulled a letter from his pocket, tugged it out of the envelope, consulted it, and thrust it back.

"—my instructions give me latitude. They say you may be trusted, Ommony. I like a man who may be trusted. I invariably trust him once at any rate!

"But understand me, I'm responsible. By gad, sir, I accept responsibility! I trust you at my own risk! You fail, and you're responsible to me! I'll be abrupt with you! I'll take no excuses, mind! If your guts won't hold on that, you may tell me your whole plan and I'll adopt it or reject it. Now think that over."

"There's nothing to think over," said Ommony. "If you knew all I know you'd be handicapped, that's all. I invite you to play the hand as dealt. I'll lead up to you, and his honor the *diwan* will follow suit."

"Good. I like a man with guts. Dig your trenches, fire your mines, send for your shock troops, lay down your barrage, and over the top! That's business! Fail, and the drumhead afterwards; that's business too! Now what?"

It was the priests. They flocked in with the same interpreter, and he was primed, for they had had time to study their plan carefully, and they had new ammunition. One of them stood forward and reeled off a speech in his own language, pointing his finger at the *diwan*, but addressing Molyneux.

"Explain," said Molyneux when he was done, and the interpreter stepped up beside his chief.

"Memsahib Craig, the wife of a Christian missionary, has disappeared, following a slaughter of innocents in the city streets by elephants, who subsequently smashed the mission, all of which was brought on purposely by the missionaries in order that they might bring accusations against *us!* The *diwan*——"

"His honor the *diwan,*" Molyneux interrupted.

"His honor the *diwan* caused a rumor to be spread that we, the priesthood of Siva, were responsible for all this and for the woman's disappearance."

"You mean memsahib Craig's disappearance?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why in blazes don't you say so?"

"Whereas we know nothing of the matter, except this: That word was brought to us, saying a lady's clothes are in the waterway. So we paid the *diwan's* boatmen to look for them, and they found clothes, identified subsequently in our presence as memsahib Craig's by Craig sahib himself—found them in the *diwan's* fishing-nets; which nets, I may add incidentally, are spread nightly by the *diwan's* orders for his own use and profit, he employing for the purpose boatmen paid from the tax receipts. We ask your honor to question those boatmen, whom the *diwan* now has under lock and key."

"Is that agreeable?" asked Molyneux.

"Perfectly," said the *diwan*. "The boatmen will tell you that they *saw* priests carry off memsahib Craig."

"We maintain that they were *not* priests.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

We assert that they, if they exist at all, were villains in the *diwan's* pay. In further proof of which, a priest of ours named Jannath, who knew more about this business than his honor the *diwan* thought convenient, has likewise disappeared. We accuse the *diwan* of instigation and complicity!"

Molyneux leaned on the arm of his chair and faced the *diwan.*

"Any knowledge of this?" he asked.

"None," said the *diwan* truthfully.

Molyneux frowned toward the priests again.

"—— me! What a mess of lies this is!"

"*Sahib*, we tell only the plain truth."

"Then you don't know where memsahib Craig is?"

"No, *sahib;* but we believe she is dead, and that Jannath has also been drowned by the *diwan's* orders."

"Put that in writing!" ordered Molyneux.

They tried to avoid it, whispering excuse after excuse to the interpreter, the last of which was nearly valid:

"We have no authority. Our high priest Parumpadpa is absent."

"You seem to think you have authority to accuse the *diwan sahib!*" Molyneux retorted. "Bring Parumpadpa here!"

"*Sahib*, it is not fitting that our high priest should be subject to possible insult. We——"

"All right. I respect a high priest. Paper—pen—ink—blotter? Thank you. Now!"

He drew his chair up to the table and began to write in a fist like a tombstone-maker's script, reading aloud as each word bit into the paper.

"We the undersigned, being priests of Siva's temple, do declare on oath that we do not know the present whereabouts of Mrs. Elsa Craig, wife of a missionary, and furthermore that we had nothing to do with her disappearance."

"Sign that, all of you, in my presence."

The interpreter interpreted. The thing looked innocent enough. One by one they came to the desk and wrote their signatures. Molyneux blotted it and handed it back to the nearest priest.

"Take that to Parumpadpa. Have him sign it too. Tell him that if he refuses I'll know exactly what to think! Meanwhile I'll interview those boatmen. Bring that signed document to me this afternoon. If Mrs. Craig isn't found by six o'clock this evening I'll search the temple!"

"But the charge against us should also be in writing!"

"Who has charged you?" Molyneux demanded, and they hardly dared admit possession of copies of official telegrams. They filed out.

"Has his Highness the maharaja any troops that could be counted on in an issue with the priests?" asked Molyneux as soon as the door was shut.

"Many of them might be afraid of the priests. But there is a regiment of cavalry that served abroad; the men lost caste by crossing the ocean, and the priests have refused to reinstate them without great expenditure of money, which the men, most of whom have wives and families, can not afford. That regiment would be entirely dependable."

"I'd like to speak with their commanding officer," said Molyneux. "They're all Hindus, eh? Not afraid to march into a temple?"

"They would enter if so ordered. But, Sir William, I should warn you: None but a Hindu has ever set foot inside the temple of Siva. There are sacred mysteries. The intrusion of an Englishman, however distinguished, would be considered sacrilege. An appeal by the priests to the mob——"

"I'll let you know when I'm afraid," said Molyneux. "Are the boatmen next?"

IT WAS then that Ommony excused himself. He was not afraid of anything the boatmen might admit. Their tale would involve the priests undoubtedly, and the worst they could say of himself was that he had advised them to obey the priests in the matter of Elsa Craig's clothes. He yawned.

"Up all night," he explained.

"Take a nap," advised Molyneux.

But the *diwan's* eyes met Ommony's and twinkled.

"I think I'll ride it off."

"Good! Guts!" said Molyneux.

"May I have a horse? The one you lent me is all in."

"You shall have the best horse in his Highness' stable."

The *diwan* rang the desk bell.

"Now what—in blazes— Well—I said I'd trust you——"

Molyneux laid his iron jaw on a fist like a

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

club, watching Ommony's broad back as he walked out.

CHAPTER XIII

"Good dog, Di!"

OMMONY rode furiously, but it was two hours after noon before he reached Elsa's hiding-place and tied his sweating horse inside under the arch.

"Have you fed him?" he demanded.

"Nay, *sahib*."

"Good. A fed priest folds hands on his lap and dreams all's well. Unfed, he worries. Worry does the wrong thing. Lord send I say the right one!"

Diana, dog-weary, flopped and fell asleep under the ancient arch, but Ommony walked to the tool-house and interrupted Jannath's meditations.

"Things look rotten for you priests!" he began. "Sir William Molyneux has come. At six o'clock he intends to demand memsahib Craig alive and unhurt, and if she isn't forthcoming he'll search the temple.

"Parumpadpa is in panic. He committed all of you to a statement that she's dead, and now the other priests begin to see the unwisdom of that. They're about ready to turn on Parumpadpa. If you'll overlook my having handled you roughly last night, I'll give you a chance to produce Mrs. Craig and save the situation."

Jannath nodded. Promises not actually spoken are easier to repudiate. His eyes betrayed no intention of forgetting or forgiving anything, but a great, new hope.

"You understand," said Ommony, "if she isn't forthcoming by six, Brass-face will search from dome to crypt. The mob can't stop him; he has troops. The only way to stop him is to produce *her*. If Parumpadpa can't produce her, and you do; if Parumpadpa swears she isn't there, and you demonstrate she is, producing her in the nick of time to save the temple from desecration—you win! Parumpadpa will be down and out—*napoo*—finish! Understand me?"

None knew that better than Jannath. He even smiled; but whether from long habit his facial muscles naturally bent that way, or whether there was new treachery awakening would have been hard to guess.

"You'll have to be careful. If Parumpadpa's men catch sight of her they'll take her away from you, of course, and you'll have to bear the whole responsibility. They won't stick at sacrificing you to save their own skins. Do you know a secret way into the temple?"

Again Jannath nodded. He knew half a dozen secret entrances. He also knew things of which none but Siva's priesthood have an inkling, and what scandal there would be if any foreigner should be known to have penetrated into the temple crypts.

Ommony was aware that there were subtle overturnings going on behind the inscrutable mask, but he had no time to spare, nor any means of guessing what the treachery, if that it was, might be. If he could have seen four hours ahead and could have known what desperate, dumb seconds were to hold the balance, he would have flinched. But men win mains by never knowing too much. All the truth at once would scare the wits out of the bravest.

"Will you take food?" Ommony asked him?

But Jannath had gone his limit in accepting defilement at Ommony's hands, and proposed to die rather than take food from him. He snarled a rebuke. So Ommony left him locked in, and went in search of Elsa Craig.

He found her ready, resolute and less inclined to feel friendly than he hoped. She seemed to have slipped back into her earlier suspicion of him. However, she raised no objections, and walked beside him draped in the cashmere shawl over a silken Hindu costume that was once the *diwan's* wife's.

"You look wonderful," he said; but that only offended her.

She did not thaw in the slightest until she saw the dog under the arch; but endearments lavished on Diana then perhaps decided the outcome of the next few hours. Diana, like most hounds, would accept all the petting offered from a friend.

They harnessed up the *ekka*, its driver backing the corn-fed dun between the shafts while Elsa held them up, and Ommony wrote a short note to Molyneux on a leaf of his memorandum-book. Then he brought Jannath and motioned him into the curtained *ekka* first.

"You'll have to ride with him," he said to Elsa. "Would you like my pistol?"

"It would only be a bluff. I wouldn't use it."

"Um-m-m! Do you care if I put the dog in with you? She's tired and has a sore foot where a thorn went in."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

That was the last thing to which Elsa would object. First aid to man or beast was instinctive with her. She would even have rearranged the bandage on Jannath's wrist if he had let her touch him.

Then with passengers inside, the *ekka* bumped down the brick steps, and the gate of the Home of Peace clanged shut behind them. A hot wind seared the landscape and Jannath, peering through the curtain in front, had to half-close his eyes.

"Put your head in!" Ommony commanded. "When we reach the city then tell the driver where to go without showing yourself. Now, drive like the ——!"

So the dun ate whip, and Ommony cantered alongside hoping the motion would not upset Elsa's stomach, or her nerves, which would be worse. It was touch and go whether they could reach the goal in time.

He did not dare to slacken speed, nor even to stop and ask her how she felt; for what could he have done about it? It was forward, and hard through the fords at risk of broken wheels, with the more mud and dust the merrier because that would help make them inconspicuous. And tough Scots ancestry in Elsa Craig held her immune from seasickness.

The *ekka* creaked and groaned. Its wheels shrieked torture. Time and again the dun pitched forward on weak knees, and once had to be unharnessed and pulled up again.

The sun wore down into a crimsoning sky. Long before they reached the city they could hear the tumult of a demonstration staged at Parumpadpa's order—for the high priest was unwise enough to think danger would make Brass-face rescind a threat! They could hear drums reverberating like the roll of thunder, and Jannath, who knew how easily the mob could be worked to that pitch, smiled to himself complacently.

They had twenty minutes to spare when the dun staggered into the city, and Jannath, peering between the curtains, began to direct the driver right and left. For a while he seemed to be making for Siva's temple; but within a hundred yards of it, three dinning, crowded streets away, he suddenly ordered a turn about and they plunged into a narrow lane in the opposite direction. It was nearly blind on both sides—nothing but walls with barred doors at intervals and, here and there, the irregular outline of a roof against the sunset.

They stopped in the narrowest place, in front of the narrowest door of all, set deep into the wall and thickly studded with bronze nails. Jannath slipped out between the front curtains before Ommony could spur his horse between wheel and wall in the gut where the alley curved.

There was a narrow, barred slit in the door, and Jannath spoke through that. The door opened about an inch, as if some one within were holding it ready. Jannath shrank into the recess out of reach, and it was too late then to grab him by the neck and keep control of him.

WITH growing misgiving Ommony dismounted. The dog jumped out and made ready to attack Jannath from under the *ekka* at the first hint from Ommony; but it was in his mind that minute to call off everything. What right had he to risk a woman's life when he could save her by simply ordering the *ekka* to drive on?

He went to the rear end to lean in through the curtains and caution Elsa to remain inside. But she stepped out before he could speak.

"All ready!" she said, smiling.

Maybe the Christians smiled and spoke and looked like that before they stepped into the arena in ancient Rome. She was nothing if not admirable.

Then Jannath yelped. The *ekka*-driver whacked the foundered dun and drove away. Ommony had thrown his horse's reins over a peg on the tail-end; so the horse went too.

And out of doors before them and behind, some thirty yards in each direction up and down the alley, there came other priests and priests' attendants. There was no retreat, nor any use in sending the dog to change the *ekka*-driver's mind. There was room to have fought, now the *ekka* was out of the way, but an impulse not to fight—an inner prompting to go forward with the whole affair.

He could see in his mind's eye Molyneux in white drill, dress sword and official helmet approaching the temple entrance, striding straight and taking no heed whatever of side issues.

Jannath beckoned. The door opened wider. Elsa Craig, with less than a full

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

glance at Ommony over her shoulder, walked straight in, and the dog followed close at her heels. The priests—four or five from each direction—started to run as if their intention was to cut in in front of Ommony and block the way. With a sickening feeling in his heart of having mismanaged it all and failed, he followed Elsa with a leap, repeater in one hand and riding-whip in the other; and instead of priests at his back the door slammed shut—in darkness!

"Where are you?"

No answer. Not even Diana's whimper to announce her whereabouts. Absolute silence, and a sense of being shut within thick walls. No glint of light; the slit in the door he entered by was covered by an iron plate, and he could not feel what fastened it.

Matches! He stuck the riding-whip under his arm to grope in his pocket—found a box of safeties—worried one out with impatient fingers—struck once without result—struck again—and the fire he saw was in his own eyes as he fell! He was hit hard, and he knew it—even knew it was a sandbag—felt the numbness down his neck and shoulders—knew enough to lie still.

He was not unconscious—knew that presently. He felt as if Cottswold Ommony were lying down and out, perhaps dead, while he, another man, was looking on, or rather listening in, for it was much too dark to see. And his brain was working perfectly; he understood each word he listened to, in a language not so many know besides the priests.

"Is he dead?"

"I think so."

"Better hit again and make sure."

"No need. If he comes to life I will hit him."

"Have you his pistol?"

"Yes."

"What is the meaning of all this, Jannath?"

"Send some one with money to that *ekka*-driver. He must either be killed or bribed to go away. What he knows must be covered up."

"Presently. No hurry about that. Brass-Face threatened to search the temple. He is on the way. Parumpadpa is distracted and blames all on you."

"Parumpadpa shall eat blame for this. I am the next high priest. Those who are my friends now will be recompensed. Parumpadpa has said she is dead. We will prove it."

"We have all said that."

"My friends, and I, will say that Parumpadpa ordered it. She must be killed and thrown into the crypt. We will show her, dead, to Brass-Face, saying Parumpadpa did it. To the people we will say that Parumpadpa is to blame for desecration of the temple."

"Why kill her? Why not give her up alive to Brass-Face?"

"She knows too much. She would deny what we say."

"Then what about this man?"

"Let him be found dead along with her. Of him we will say it is a scandal; that he loved the missionary's wife. Loving not such scandals, the British will be easier to manage afterward. Take this pistol and go in and kill her."

"Not here! There would be a noise."

"Then go in with a dagger or a rope."

"None dares. It is dark, and that dog is as big as a man—more savage, too, than ten men!"

"All right; let her walk into the crypt; that is easier. There you and I will kill her. Leave the dog to me. I will shoot the dog with this pistol; you use your dagger on the woman."

"I am afraid."

"Ask no favors then when I am high priest! You can see that Parumpadpa's day is done. His friends will fall with him. There will be a collapse. Who but I can restore our former prestige?"

"Then you kill the woman, and I will try to shoot the dog."

"No. You must be compromised, so that I may be sure you won't betray me afterward. Come along; help me drag this thing."

"Ach-h! I hate to touch a corpse; it is defilement."

"That is why I haven't killed him, quite. We will finish the business in the crypt. Make haste. Brass-Face may be at the door already."

They each took a leg and dragged Ommony face upward over smooth flags with gaps between them; and every bump over the gaps brought Ommony to clearer consciousness. The healthy blood resumed its coursing, and he felt the life flow back through nerves and muscles, tingling like pin-points.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Better listen first," said Jannath's accomplice.

"Yes, I'll go with you. There must be no slip!"

"Leave me to watch here then, while you go."

"Not I! Come with me. Is that door shut?"

"Yes."

"Come on, then."

They let go Ommony's legs and hurried down an echoing passage in the dark. Ommony lay still until he heard a door shut behind them in the distance before he got to his knees and fell forward again from vertigo. Afraid to try that again, lest reaction should overcome him altogether, he lay still, calling: "Di! Di!" in a low voice. Then he whistled, and heard Diana's snuffling beyond a door and the dog's low whimper.

He crawled to the door, and felt a half-inch crack beneath it.

"Mrs. Craig! Mrs. Craig!" he whispered.

"Mr. Ommony? Is that you?"

He groped in his inner pocket.

"Quick! Take this!"

And he pushed under the door the page from his memorandum-book, on which he had written a message to Molyneux.

"There's a leather loop on Di's collar, near the buckle. Fold this message and push it through the loop, so that the paper sticks out at each end and can be easily seen. Then at the first chance send the dog for help. Just say: "Bring a white man! Bring a white man!" and she'll do her best.

"Don't answer me! Don't try to speak to me! I'm supposed to be dead or dying, and that's the only chance we've got—except the dog; so preserve Di's life as long as possible. *Hs-s-h!* They're coming!"

He crawled back to the spot where they had left him and lay still, face upward. There were four now. Jannath and his friend had found two other men, or had been detected by them and had had to let them into the secret.

"Parumpadpa swears all is your fault, Jannath!"

"He will cease boasting presently! But silence! You two bring the woman and the dog while we drag this thing. Threaten her that if she does not keep the dog quiet you will kill them both instantly."

"Why not kill the dog at once?"

"Yes; no harm. But no noise; and be swift!"

All in pitch darkness Jannath and his friend began to drag Ommony, and the bumping over smooth, unevenly laid flags so dinned into his head that he could hardly hear the others open the door of the room where Elsa was. But he heard what followed—thunder! Volleys of angry growling split apart by Diana's war bark! Cries for help!

THEY let go Ommony's legs and ran back, crying for silence. He decided it was time to come to life and, now or never, to test his returning strength. He whistled—shouted:

"Good dog, Di! Down 'em!"

He managed to get to his feet. Jannath returned on the run, and Ommony could hear the sand-bag whirling as the priest got speed up for a blow that should finish him. If he could only see!

But neither could Jannath see. The priest swung—missed—clutched at his victim—and went down as a chance left swing by Ommony went home under the angle of his jaw.

Down on his knees on the priest's empty belly went Ommony, searching for the pistol—found it!—felt Jannath's teeth on his forearm trying to tear the muscle out— and brought the butt of a forty-five down hard on the shaven head. That ended Jannath's chance of the high-priesthood. The skull broke like an egg-shell.

Back down the passage there was pandemonium, all echoes of growling—shouts—feet slipping on stone—and a woman gasping, crying:

"Careful! Careful!"

"Sic 'em, Di!" yelled Ommony.

The dog's best chance for safety against daggers lay in swift attack; and the more ferocious she was, the better his chance from the rear. He ran with both hands out in front, guided by sound, turned to the right when he felt the corner of the wall, and nearly fell again, for a man crashed backward into him to escape Diana's jaws.

He used the butt again. Diana smelled him—slobbered on him—began to wriggle and yelp pleasure—then yelped in earnest as a long knife reaching for her slit the skin along her flank. She turned and had that opponent by the throat before the echo of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

her yelp came off the wall, and Ommony saved a second stab pointblank with the forty-five.

By its flash he saw Elsa, white and motionless against a corner of a four-square stone cell—and the third man coming for him—felt the wind of the dagger descending—thrust the muzzle against naked ribs—and fired again.

"Four all accounted for! Are there any more in there?"

"No more," said Elsa. "Are you hurt?"

"No. Come."

"We ought to stay and give first aid to these."

"They've had *all* they'll need! Come on!"

He took her hand and ran with her, Diana careering ahead to smell out ambush and making the long passage echo with a hunting-howl. Elsa tripped over Jannath's body and had to be helped up.

"What next?" she gasped.

"Straight through with the plan!"

"Do you know the way?"

"We'll find it! Come on—hurry!"

"I've hurt my knee."

"Come on!"

At the end of possibly a hundred yards of echoing darkness they ran into a door. He stopped and struck matches—three of them; the —— things wouldn't light.

Suddenly it occurred to him to try the door. It was unlocked. They ran through into gloom that was as daylight by comparison, and down endless steps, with Diana's waving tail always a turn ahead of them and her deep, delighted bark announcing, "All's well!"

Into another passage—deep below ground-level this one—and along that for fifty yards to rising steps. Diana charged up them and returned looking puzzled, standing where an overhead shaft allowed a beam of distant light to filter in.

"What is it, Di? Lord! If a dog could only talk! Come on; we'll have to chance it!"

Up, and up, dragging Elsa by the hand, she following gamely—turn, and turn again—another short passage—steps—and then a door—locked! No lock on this side—only a keyhole, big enough to thrust the muzzle of the forty-five in easily. He fired, and an ancient iron lock fell loose on the other side.

Something still held, but a shove with most of his remaining strength sent the door swinging, and Diana rushed in past him—into the crypt—no doubt of it—they were under Siva's temple.

In a gloom like twilight, images of what looked like a dozen different gods were ranged against the walls, as if one by one they had been superseded and relegated to this lumber-room. But the place was clean from use. There was an altar in it with a lingam, and away beyond that steps leading upward into golden light.

"Temple lamps up there!" said Ommony. "It's a goal! Come on!"

They could hear confusion in the temple—men's voices, and a noise as if things were being moved to barricade a door. Some one was giving orders. Ommony caught one's purport.

"They're coming! Shut the door now! Shut it in their faces!"

Then Diana must have burst among the priests like an apparition. Ommony, speeding up the last steps, lost sight of her, for the inside of the temple was a maze of pillars, images and colored lights, with a great clear space in the midst.

But the great door was open yet. The bolt that should drop into a hole in the stone threshhold caught in the stones as they fumbled in their haste. There was a gap yet a yard wide, through which the outer twilight streamed.

"Good dog, Di! Get a white man! Go bring him!"

Like a flash the dog broke through; and then they raised the bolt, and the door slammed after her, missing the end of her tail by the breadth of a hair on it.

"Now," said Ommony, "if I'm not sick I feel like it. My head aches. Take this pistol and defend yourself. If you're alive when Molyneux comes in, say you came up from the crypt. Say nothing more if you can help it. Please obey that."

Then he sat down suddenly with his back against the wall in a corner and his heels sliding out from under him. His head fell forward on his chest, and Elsa, with the pistol in her right hand, stood there looking at the priests and him, and wondering what to do.

CHAPTER XIV

"She euchered the Ephesians!"

SIR WILLIAM MOLYNEUX, advancing on foot up the narrow street toward the temple with a mounted regiment behind him, met the *diwan's* carriage coming from

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the other direction and saluted. Behind the *diwan* was a company of infantry, not nearly so dependable, but there in order that the maharaja's forces might be fully represented.

Brass-Face pulled out his watch. He seemed totally unconscious of a crowd that swarmed behind the troops and yelled at him from roofs and every imaginable vantage-point. A stone fell and broke within two feet of him, but he took no notice.

"Six-thirty! I've allowed them half an hour's grace. *Diwan sahib*, I intend to force that temple door unless they open it or produce Mrs. Craig.

A big stone knocked the watch out of his hand, but he took no notice. He was smiling—frowning over it—a little like a heavyweight considering the opponent from his corner of the ring.

"Ah! There's a priest. Perhaps they intend to be sensible."

The temple door was shut, but a priest came solemnly around a corner of the building, mounted the steps at the end, and then came down them straight toward Molyneux. Even the crowd grew still. The only sounds were the stamping of restless troop-horses and a dog's bark not far away. The priest stood still in front of Molyneux and waited to be addressed.

"Where's Mrs. Craig?" asked Molyneux in English.

"We do not know."

"What does he say?"

"He says he doesn't know," interpreted the *diwan*.

"Is she in that temple?"

"No."

"What does he say?"

"He says, 'No.' "

"He'll have to prove it! Tell him that! My information is that she is in there."

The *diwan* spoke, and the priest grew angry.

"She is not in there. We know nothing of her. She is probably dead by the *diwan's* orders."

"Lord! I hate this!" muttered Molyneux.

He turned half-about to say something to the troops' commanding officer but checked himself. He caught sight of a white man's helmet—some one—Craig—it could not be another—forcing his way violently toward him along the line between the troopers and the crowd.

"Let that man come! What is it, Craig?"

Craig burst through and ran to him, holding a great bleeding stag-hound by the collar with one hand—waving a piece of paper in the other—breathless.

"A letter—Ommony—my wife—they're in there!"

He thrust the paper into Molyneux's hand.

"But this is addressed to me, sir!"

"Can't help that! I read it before I knew. It was in the dog's collar. She found me, and I've found you! They're in there now! Get busy, man!"

"I accept that explanation. All right, Craig."

"Then hurry, man! Look sharp!"

But Brass-Face, whom no man ever succeeded in hurrying, paused to read the penciled note:

> You will find Mrs. Craig in the temple. I will try to worm my way in and be with her. When you get this note it will be time to act swiftly.—C. O.

Swiftly was another thing from hurriedly. Molyneux and speed could be one unit on occasion, with unexpectedness on top of that to hurry the other side.

"Open that door!" he commanded, feeling for his watch, forgetting it was in fragments at his feet.

He had meant to allow sixty seconds.

"We will not!" the priest answered. "There is an image backed against it. You may not—can not—enter!"

The *diwan* started to interpret, but Molyneux did not wait for that. He seized the priest by neck and one arm twisted the arm and forced the priest to face about.

"Forward!" he commanded. "Straight to that door you came through!"

Then over his shoulder to the maharaja's officer:

"Twenty men! Dismount 'em, and follow me!"

The priest went on a run, astonishingly undignified. The crowd, after one yell, grew dumb with amazement. Twenty troopers and their officer, all casteless, not enamored of the priests, swept Craig along between them, so that it almost looked to the crowd as if Craig were arrested. They began to yell again.

Molyneux came to a halt at a little side door between two projecting corners of the temple wall and ordered the troopers to drive out members of the crowd who had packed themselves in there in the hope of seeing something.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Tell 'em to open it!" he ordered, squeezing the priest's neck. "Say if they don't I'll break it down!"

He backed up his threat by beckoning the troopers forward, and the priest, squirming and discovering no hope, cried out. Like an echo to his cry the troopers' carbines thundered on the wood; and some one inside drew the bolt.

Molyneux let go the priest's neck and jumped in with Craig at his heels. Diana nearly upset them both, dashing between them, yelping and then throwing up her head to make the great dome echo to her hunting-call. Then she left them in a series of elastic leaps, with toe-nails clattering and slipping on the marble, for the rear of the building, where in lamp-lit gloom stood Elsa, at bay, surrounded by a dozen priests, with some one's blue repeating pistol in her right hand.

"MY WIFE! Elsa!"

Craig ran forward, reckless of the priests, who backed away before Diana's reawakened fury. The dog seemed to think they had killed her master. She charged back and forth to lick him and savage them alternately.

"Elsa! What does this mean?"

"What?"

"This costume?"

"They took my clothes away and——"

That was enough for Molyneux. He was bending over Ommony to feel his heartbeats.

"Where have you been?" he asked.

"In the dark! Mr. Ommony brought me up those steps——"

"Admit the *diwan!*" Molyneux commanded. "Where's the high priest? Summon Parumpadpa!"

"Are you hurt?" he asked Elsa, resuming his slapping of Ommony's wrists with an eye on Diana, who appeared to view his ministrations with distrust.

But she and her husband were being foolish and she didn't even answer him.

The *diwan* entered, leaning on a man's arm, and almost in the same second they brought in Parumpadpa, two priests on each side doing their best to enhance his dignity. But better gild a lily! He was all archpriesthood typified. The long beard, nearly to his waist, and his robes of office made it seem a sacrilege to speak above a whisper.

But Molyneux kept him waiting. There were signs of life in Ommony, so he shook him and raised him up, then set him with back against a pillar. Not noticing the high priest yet, but holding Ommony by the lapel of his coat, he turned his head and whispered to the *diwan.*

"We've got to use tact! Get me?"

The *diwan* nodded and tried to hide a smile.

"The less said the better. You understand? His Majesty's Government would rather avoid a scandal.

"Does he know English? No? Will you interpret? Excellent! Hullo, this fellow's coming to! How now, Ommony? Feeling better?"

Ommony murmured something. Molyneux stopped to listen—nodded.

"Craig, come over here please. Will you be satisfied if they pay for the cost of repairing your mission from the temple funds? Yes? Well, that's a Christian attitude. I like a Christian. Mrs. Craig, does that seem all right to you? Good."

He turned to the *diwan.*

"Tell him that, please!"

Parumpadpa listened with amazement he could hardly contain. He had expected personal indignity. Not knowing where Elsa had been, he could only suppose that Ommony had broken in somehow and found her in the crypt, where some of his priests, he thought, must have concealed her without his knowledge. If so, these terms were mild. He gave assent, not bargaining, with all the dignity at his command.

But Ommony tugged Molyneux's coat, and he bent his head once more to listen.

"Oh! Ah! Yes, I get you!"

He turned to the *diwan.*

"Tell him this serious offense is against his Highness the maharaja almost as much as against these innocent people."

The *diwan* interpreted. The high priest bowed.

"Law—order—his Highness' Government must be respected."

The high priest bowed again, but with slightly more reserve.

"Unless he wants his Britannic Majesty's Government to interfere and mete out punishment there must be an apology to his Highness the maharaja——"

Parumpadpa almost let a smile escape him, but concealed it with another stately bow. Ommony whispered again.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"—and compensation in some form acceptable to his Highness."

Parumpadpa frowned.

"I understand this temple's revenue is drawn in part from a tax on all cut timber. Will it be acceptable to his Highness if that revenue is transferred to the State for the specified purpose of planting trees?"

"I believe so. I may say, 'Yes,'" said the *diwan*.

He interpreted, and Parumpadpa scowled.

"Tell him he may agree to that or do the other thing!" said Molyneux, glaring at the high priest.

And the high priest yielded. There was no alternative.

"Pens, ink and paper!" Molyneux commanded. "We'll sign up now and get it over with."

So they set a table under the dome of Siva's temple, and for the first time in all history a contract between Church and State was drawn up and signed in that sacred edifice with Parumpadpa's signature, witnessed by Molyneux, and lacking nothing but the maharaja's seal to make it absolute.

"There!" exclaimed Molyneux, throwing sand on his own signature to dry the ink. "Tact! Tact's the stuff! I told you I'm an oil-can! Assure his Eminence I have a deep respect for high priests. I like a man who takes his gruel standing up. Yes, sir; convey him my compliments!"

He put an arm like a grapnel around Ommony and, saluting the high priest with the other, started for the door.

"Why, hullo, you're making a quick recovery! Guts, Ommony! By gad, sir, I like guts in a man! Why, —— me! You can walk alone! What's happened?"

"Trees!" said Ommany. "I see trees!"

"Still light-headed, I perceive. I wonder what hit you. The less said the better, of course. I mean to ask no questions. All's settled nicely. But between you and me, my boy, I've a notion you've put something over."

"No. Some one else did."

"Who then?"

"Diana! She euchered the Ephesians! Shall we go, sir? It must be dinner-time. Mrs. Craig and I had no lunch."

"Guts! By ——, yes, that dog has guts!" said Molyneux. "We'll have to stitch that wound up for her, Ommony. I see she's still bleeding a bit. You hold her, and I'll stitch. By gad, sir, I admire a dog with guts!"

SOME WILD WESTERN LAW

by John L. Considine

FRONTIER courts rendered some queer decisions in the pioneer days. One of these, destined to be embalmed in the annals of California, was handed down by Justice Peter H. Burnett, of the supreme bench of California, in what was known as the Archy case.

Charles A. Stovall, a citizen of Mississippi, went overland from that State to California, taking with him his slave, a negro boy named Archy. At Sacramento he hired Archy out, but finally, designing to return to Mississippi, put the slave aboard a Sacramento River steamer with the intention of sending him to San Francisco and thence to Mississippi in charge of an agent.

The boy escaped from the boat, but Stovall had him arrested as a fugitive slave by the Sacramento chief of police, who refused in turn to deliver him into the hands of his master. Stovall began habeas corpus proceedings, and the matter, which attracted great public attention because Archy's was the first and probably the only case of a slave's being brought voluntarily into the State, came before the supreme court for adjudication. Judge Burnett, who had been the first Governor of California after it became a State, and who was born in the South and was suspected of strong Southern sympathies, handed down the opinion of the court.

After deciding that Stovall was neither a transient traveler nor a visitor and therefore under the general law was not entitled to the possession of Archy, he yet held that there were circumstances in connection with this particular case that might exempt Stovall from the operation of the rules laid down. One was that Stovall

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

was "a young man" who was "traveling for his health," another that "he was short of means upon his arrival in California," and still another that this was the "first case that had occurred under the existing law."

"This is the first case," continued Judge Burnett, "and under the circumstances we are not disposed to rigidly enforce the rule for the first time. But in reference to all future cases, it is our purpose to enforce the rules laid down strictly according to their true intent and spirit," and he ordered Archy to be turned over to his master.

Joseph G. Baldwin, who enjoyed a local reputation as an author and a wit, and who afterward succeeded Burnett on the bench, characterized the decision as "giving the law to the North and the nigger to the South," and subsequently in one of his happy moments prepared a humorous abstract or syllabus of the case, in which he said it decided that the constitution does not apply to young men traveling for their health; that it does not apply in cases arising for the first time; and that the decisions of the supreme court are not to be taken as precedents.

Archy, after being delivered to Stovall, was taken to San Francisco on his way to Mississippi, and there his friends sued out a new writ of habeas corpus, this time for his release, and, after a number of trying experiences, in the course of which he was rearrested, was finally freed—"much to Archy's own relief and to the satisfaction of the larger part of the community," as a chronicler of the annals of those days remarked.

Even more remarkable in its way was the decision of Chief Justice Hugh C. Murray of the same court a few years previous, in which he declared that Chinamen are really Indians. The provisions of the statute of 1850 excluding Indians and negroes or mulattoes from giving evidence in favor of or against a white person either in civil or criminal cases were still in force in 1854, notwithstanding repeated attempts in the intervening years to secure their repeal.

In that year a man named Hall had been convicted of murder on the testimony of Chinese witnesses, and appealed to the supreme court. Murray's opinion, concurred in by Justice Solomon Heydenfelt, held that the word "Indian," as used in the statute concerning witnesses, included not only the North American Indians, but the whole Mongolian race. He acknowledged that the word as commonly used at the present day was specific and not generic and referred only to North American Indians; but he claimed that as in the days of Columbus all the countries washed by the Chinese waters were denominated the Indies, therefore all the Asiatics were Indians and inhibited by the statute from testifying against a white man.

He attempted to bolster up this opinion by two remarkable paragraphs, in one of which he said—

"We have carefully considered all the consequences resulting from a different rule of construction and are satisfied that even in a doubtful case we would be impelled to this decision on the grounds of public policy."

And in another he continued—

"The anomalous spectacle of a distinct people—living in our community, recognizing no laws of this State except through necessity, bringing with them their prejudices and national feuds, in which they indulge in open violation of law, whose mendacity is proverbial; a race of people whom Nature has marked as inferior and who are incapable of progress or intellectual development beyond a certain point, as their history has shown; differing in language, opinion, color and physical conformation, between whom and ourselves Nature has placed an impassible difference—is now presented; and for them is claimed, not only the right to swear away the life of a citizen, but the further privilege of participating with us in administering the affairs of the Government."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

STRONG AND WEAK

by JOHN WEBB

IT WAS just at the end of the rainy season. The eight months' downpour had ceased, and the trade winds, booming down from the northeast, sent the gray rain clouds scurrying before them. The Caribbean Sea, awakening from its lethargy of the wet months, began sending long swells rolling toward the south and west, and the spume was daily flying higher and higher over the breakwater. Coast dwellers looked sadly and with gloomy foreboding at their doomed porch screens, and the royal palms lining the walks bent their backs to the steady rush of wind and gazed sorrowfully after the departing rain clouds. The dry season was on.

A man, small of body and feature, and wearing a heavy coat even in the warm tropical climate of Colon, stood at the corner of Front and Eleventh streets in that sleepy little seaport. By the cut of his short greasy coat, the strands of sun-burned hair that protruded from beneath his blue, black-visored cap, the tight-drawn skin that covered his sad countenance, tanned and scoured by the lash of many salt winds, passers-by knew him for a sailor at a glance. He was a man well past middle age, with a habitual stoop and with his arms twisted and his hands gnarled and claw-like from much pulling on ropes. His mouth was down curved at the corners and his faded blue eyes were sorrowful. There was a pathetic appeal to the little man that was felt by even the casual observer.

He stood quietly, with his feet well spread and his shoulders resting easily against the window frame of the Chinese curio shop at his back, and gazed alternately at the fleecy white cloud forms sailing across the azure sky and into the faces of the few pedestrians that braved the midday sun.

A beech-comber, filthy and unkempt, hatless and with his bare feet showing through the holes in his worn, unlaced shoes, edged to the sailorman's side and spoke confidentially in his ear.

"Ye haven't got a pinch of tobacca ye can spare to a sailorman down on his luck,—have ye mate?" he asked in a harsh whine. "Or maybe a few centavos for a bit of rum to drive out the fever?"

He was a big man, the beach-comber, fully a head taller than the wispy little man in the pea jacket, but his big frame was clearly only the shell of a once splendid specimen of manhood. His manner was wheedling and hang-dog, and his bleary, whisky-dulled brown eyes were like those of a mongrel that expects to be kicked. The smaller man put his hand in his pocket, and the other, at the jingle of coins, wiped his dry lips with the back of one hand in anticipation.

"Ye be a sailor?"

The voice was kindly and the faded eyes almost paternal.

"Yes, sir."

The big man spoke as one who recognizes a superior, and he touched his forehead in a slouchy salute.

"But I missed me ship. The *Sarah Watts* 'twas—a down-East schooner outa Bath. Two months ago—been here since."

He showed his yellow teeth in a grin and looked hopefully at the still pocketed hand.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Would ye like a ship?"

"Yes—sure."

He spoke abstractedly and his partly outstretched hand was itching for the feel of the silver piece he expected.

"And would ye sign on now—today?"

His voice was even, but he looked quickly and speculatingly at the beach-comber.

"Eh, what?"

He was startled, and with the hope fading from his eyes he dropped his hand disgustedly. "I—well, to tell ye the truth, mate—ye see it's like dis——"

"Aw, ye're not a sailor," broke in the little man, and he shoved his hat on the back of his head with a pugnacious gesture.

"Ye're not a sailor, ye're a dirty bum! Ye don't want a ship, ye'd ruther hang on the corner and bum honest sailormen for rum money. Ye're a barroom sailor!"

"Aw say, mate, listen will ye? I——"

"I said ye're a bum. Ye'd ruther lay around Colon and drink monkey rum with the spigotties than go to sea. Ye say ye're down on your luck and ye wont sign on the finest little ship that ever sailed the sea."

He pointed out over the bay to where a small black tramp steamer lay at anchor inside the breakwater.

"The *Hawk's* 'er name, and the captain's—the captain's all right," he finished rather lamely. "And the chow is——"

"Whut's 'is name?" interrupted the other.

At the mention of the *Hawk* his eyes had taken on a strange light and he was gazing at the distant ship with interest.

"—and the chow's fust rate, and she's an easy berth for an A. B. And—and——"

"Whut's 'is name?" repeated the other.

"Whose name, —— it?"

The *Hawk's* representative was irritated.

"The captain's."

"Oh! It's McGuire."

The little sailor spoke casually, but he was watching the tall man out of the corners of his eyes.

"James McGuire."

"Jim McGuire," corrected the tall man. "Some times they call 'im 'One-Two Mac,' eh?"

"Aw, heck!"

The little man in the pea coat turned half away.

"Jig's up," he murmured to himself.

"I'll sign."

The smaller man spun on his heel and stared.

"You'll—you'll——"

"I'll sign."

"Of course you will, of course you will. Knew you was a sailorman when I fust saw you."

The little old sailor was himself in an instant.

"We'll have a little drink afore we go aboard, eh?"

The mate of the *Hawk* and the man who was not afraid to sign with One-Two Mac passed into the nearest bar.

THE *Hawk*, with her starboard anchor not yet landed on the billboard, swung sluggishly, and then, with the white range towers in line behind her, turned her lean, rust-eaten prow toward the opening in the breakwaters and the open sea. She steamed slowly, and as she neared the harbor entrance began to bow and nod to the long swells that rolled into the bay. She came abreast of the red entrance tower, and the third mate, high up on the shaky, weather-beaten bridge, sighted along the thwart-ship rail, and in answer to the captain's nod of assent, gave the time to the engine room with the telegraph.

The western sun, sliding swiftly down the last few degrees, plunged beneath the horizon and was gone. The tropic night spread its blue mantle over the Caribbean, and the stars gazed serenely down at the brown old veteran as she plunged sturdily into the trade swells. As she pitched she groaned, and a black and white gannet, circling low between the trucks, looked down at her and screeched deridingly, then sailed smoothly off shoreward in the arms of the wind. The little ship, once the pride of a coastwise steamship line that boasted of its quick service, now an outcast ocean tramp, plowed onward with undaunted courage into the steadily increasing seas.

The mate, the wispy little man of Front Street, came lightly up the bridge ladder, and crossing the bridge stopped before the captain's door and knocked briskly on the panels. In answer to an almost indistinguishable murmur from within he entered and closed the door behind him.

Captain McGuire, bracing himself with widespread feet, stood at the chart table in

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the corner. He was manipulating parallel rulers and dividers and did not look up as the mate entered, but with a frown bent closer to his work.

"All's well below, cap'n," said the mate. "Anchors secure, hatches battened—three tarps on 'em all, boats and booms double-lashed and ports dogged."

The captain merely nodded without turning, and with one hand shading his eyes from the glare of the light above the table, began rapidly to step off distances with his dividers.

"Twenty-two miles to Sucio Rock abeam," he said in a low voice, "sixteen miles bearing east. Make a note of that, Mr. Tenny. It's possible that we may see it, anyway keep your eye open for Isle de Grande light."

"Yes, sir," answered Mr. Tenny, and he scowled at the captain's back and cursed him silently with his lips.

As if he had to be reminded to keep on the watch for a light. It was an insult.

"Crew's actin' bad," he said sullenly. "'Specially the sailors. They're the scum of Cash Street—a Liverpool Irishman, two Barbadians, a San Blas Indian, a big ex-prize-fighter from the States, two Spaniards and a professional beach-comber—some'ut of a sailor though—from up Maine way. A rotten crowd—and mean, but I guess we'll manage."

The master laid the dividers carefully on the edge of the chart board, and straightening, turned the light facing the wall so as to bring the room into shadow.

"I suppose so," he said, and then with a sarcastic smile, "Best you could do?"

The little man glared.

"Yes," he said, "the best I could do with your name as a handicap. It got around that One-Two Mac was looking for a crew, and when I mentioned *Hawk*, the real sailors laughed at me. If ye weren't so dang mean we'd be able to leave port with the same crew we come in with once in a while."

The captain faced Mr. Tenny and with his hands grasping the edge of the chart table behind him leaned back and laughed. It was an unpleasant laugh. In fact, practically everything that Captain McGuire did or said was unpleasant and he was hated and feared, and his ship shunned by all wise sailormen. He was a man of moderate height, trim and athletic but not powerfully built.

His close-cropped hair was black, as were his small deep-set eyes. His nose protruded like the beak of an eagle and his straight, thin-lipped mouth was hard and unrelenting. His arms were abnormally long and loose-jointed and his hands, famous in all the ports of the Western Ocean, were long and large knuckled, and covered with skin as coarse grained and tough as the heaviest canvas.

"They are fond of me, arn't they?" The captain rolled a brown paper cigaret, and placing it between his cold lips fell again to studying his chart.

The mate stared at the captain's back and his eyes grew vicious.

"Funny thing, too," he said. "The last A. B. I got, the one from up your way, Maine, is named McGuire. He's a drunken no-good bum, but the lads below are sayin' he's your brother."

He grinned gloatingly.

"What!" The captain whirled, and Mr. Tenny slunk slightly backward from the glare of the smoldering black eyes.

"I'm only tellin' ye what they say," he growled defensively.

Captain McGuire's shoulders bunched and came forward and his slender nostrils quivered in anger. His hands were clenched so tightly that the skin of his projecting knuckles was white.

"All right," he said shortly, and dismissing Mr. Tenny with a nod he began to pace rapidly back and forth across the room.

IN THE dirty little forecastle, rank with the smell of unclean humanity, five men formed a circle about an open space on the floor beneath the smoky oil lamp. In his bunk at one side, a huge black man snored raucously. The other Barbadian, with the San Blas Indian, was on watch. A game of craps was in progress, and a little Spaniard was rolling the dice enthusiastically.

"*Ocho, ocho*," he pleaded, and rolled the cubes in a long sweeping curve on to the rough floor. They rolled and slid crazily over the uneven boards and settled in the center of the circle with the black spots forming a six. The Spaniard reached out a brown hand, and with an impatient shake of his head, scooped up the dice.

"*Covija, covija*," he said, and with the dice still clutched in one hand reached toward the nearest bunk with the other.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Malley, the big fighter, already well on the road to becoming the forecastle bully, looked up inquiringly. "What de —— does he want?" he growled.

"A blanket," interpreted McGuire, the latest addition to the *Hawk's* crew. "He wants to roll on a blanket."

"He does, does 'e?"

The fighter caught the Sapniard by his black-and-white-striped shirt and pulled him back to his former position on the floor.

"Roll yer bones, brown boy, I never shoot wit' niggers on a blanket. I'm from Chi, see, and I know dat game."

Lopez shrugged his shoulders noncommittally, and with a quick glance at his fellow countryman squatting beside Malley, rattled the cubes and swept them on to the floor. One, showing a five, stopped almost immediately, but the other skidded to the center of the circle, bounced its way through the few small coins in the center and after balancing for a second on the raised edge of a plank, rolled into a three.

It had hardly settled when Malley's big foot sent it flying back to the smiling Spaniard.

"Cocked dice," he said shortly. "Roll 'em again."

"No, no, *ocho*," complained Lopez, and he looked around at the other players for support.

Rodrigues, the Spaniard at Malley's right, let loose a torrent of Spanish, but no one, with the exception of Lopez at the opposite side of the circle, paid him any attention. McGuire shook his head and studied the holes in his torn shoes. "Limey" Higgins, a foul-mouthed blustery man and a friend of Malley, broke into anger.

"H'it was cocked, ye swine!" he roared. "Cawn't ye see? Roll the bleedin' things agine."

He looked at McGuire and winked.

"What di you sie, mite?"

The beach-comber looked from the uncouth Irishman to the hard-faced fighter and his meek brown eyes showed fright. His hands trembled and he wet his lips with his tongue.

"I don't know," he said finally.

"Yes ya do."

Malley thrust out his chin and grabbed McGuire by the arm.

"Speak up, you!"

The poor wreck looked down at his shoes to avoid the eyes of Malley and his friend. He twisted his fingers until the bones cracked and his weak mouth was quivering pitifully.

" 'Twas an eight," he mumbled at last.

"Like —— it was!" Malley sent him back on his haunches with a back-handed blow to the mouth, and bending forward he began to gather up the little pile of coins.

Lopez sprang erect, and with a long, glittering blade in his hand, cleared the distance between himself and Malley in a leap. Malley, on his knees, did not have time to arise, but he struck upward with a powerful right hand that landed on the Spaniard's chest and held him momentarily in mid-air, then followed it with a left hook that landed the man with the knife heavily in a corner. Rodrigues reached for his waistband and half-gained his feet, but Higgins' big sea boot crashed into his stomach and sent him to the floor. He fell on his back, but twisted face downward and with both hands clapsed to his stomach lay kicking convulsively in agony.

"And you, ye dirty scum!"

The Irishman, with his gnarled hands outstretched to McGuire's throat, advanced threateningly toward him.

"Ye rotten gutter snipe I'll tear the heart out of ye for lyin'."

McGuire backed fearfully into a corner, and with his arms about his head and his knees so weak that they almost refused to sustain his weight, awaited the onslaught. Malley grinned, and taking a large brown bottle from beneath the mattress of his berth, allowed a goodly portion of its contents to gurgle down his throat.

Higgins took McGuire by the hair with both hands and with a sudden wrench sent him sprawling to the floor. He was about to plant his hob-nailed boot in the fallen man's face when a voice from the door stopped him.

"Avast! Stow dat!" it said, and the boatswain, a Swede with a knowledge of nothing on earth but ships and the sea, stepped over the still writhing Spaniard on the floor and came in.

"What for you do dat, hey? You know das ban Cap'n Mac's brudder?"

He took his black pipe from his mouth and looked at them in question.

Higgins stepped back in alarm. He was a seaman, and One-Two Mac's name being a by-word in all places where seamen met, the name was freighted with meaning for

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

him. Malley, however, being a landsman, and perhaps heartened somewhat by the fiery liquor that still seared his throat, became belligerent.

"Aw, to —— wit Cap'n Mac," he said. "Who d'ya tink's afraid of him? I'd sock de chin off 'im in a minute."

Higgins shook his head dubiously, and the Swede spat disgustedly in the corner. The Barbadian, at last aroused from his slumbers, had been sitting up in his bunk and looking about the place in stupid wonderment for some time, and at Malley's words he grinned.

"Oh, mon," said the black man, "you no look see Cap'n One-Two Mac fight. Him all same fella tiger. Me see um plenty."

He turned his cheek to the light and with a huge forefinger pointed to a series of pale scars that ran from the corner of one eye to his chin.

"You look see me, huh?"

"You ban —— fool," said the Swede shortly to Malley.

The big fighter reached again for his bottle and raised it to his lips. When he took it down his face was red and perspiring.

"Ta —— wit One-Two Mac," he roared.

The door opened and closed softly, and Captain McGuire advanced slowly, almost diffidently into the forecastle.

"I HEARD you," he said quietly to Malley, and with a slight smile he passed him to where the beach-comber still crouched on the floor. He stopped beside the rum-sodden figure, and with his hands tore away the arms that covered the shrunken cheeks. The dog-like brown eyes looked up in mute appeal.

"Who did this?" asked the captain, and he looked around at the little group.

His mouth was smiling, but his eyes were smoldering like half-dead coals.

For a moment no one answered, then Lopez, just come out of his stupor, pointed his finger accusingly at Higgins.

"He, he," he shrieked, "he."

He followed his accusation with a string of foul Spanish epithets.

Higgins, the hope aroused in his cowardly breast by the momentary silence wiped out by Lopez, slunk helpless with fear against the sloping side plates of the bow. In a flash One-Two Mac was on him and the seaman never had a chance. In a second his ace was a mass of bleeding cuts where the captain's knife-like kunckles had landed. Retaliation was impossible and he attempted none, but devoted all his energies to shielding as much as possible of his battered face.

Malley, still confident, rushed from the side, and with a sledge-hammer blow of his right fist sent Captain Mac spinning across the room. The beach-comber crawled on his hands and knees to one side and with scared, staring eyes watched the whirling figures. The Barbadian climbed from his berth to the one above and watched the fight with a grin of amusement. He, for one, desired no quarrel with Captain Mac. The two Spaniards, their own grievances temporarily, but *only* temporarily, in the background, stood passively at one end of the room.

Captain McGuire, taken by surprize by Malley's sudden rush, brought up heavily against a berth stanchion and grasped it with one hand to steady himself. There was a blue mark on his left cheek where Malley's blow had landed, but his eyes were clear, and as they watched he amazed them by smiling. It was only hiss lip that smiled, however, his eyes were still smoldering with a demoniacal battle light. He glanced curiously at his new antagonist and appraised him quickly.

"You hit well," he said. "Especially from behind. Oh," he nodded understandingly, "you are the prize-fighter from the States, I suppose. I mean you were once a fighter."

"I was and still am," answered Malley.

His bearing was confident.

"But you won't be for long," said Captain Mac calmly.

Malley, with the manner of a man who is about to do a workman-like job of manhandling, set himself for the expected rush, but he never even saw the captain coming. One-Two Mac was at the ex-pugilist like a cyclone and his fists smacked left and right into Malley's countenance with a rapidity that defied the eyes of the onlookers.

Malley was a powerful man, fully forty pounds heavier than the captain and a good puncher, but he might just as well have been hitting at a darting mosquito. He struck repeatedly, hard crushing blows that would have stunned an ox, but his opponent was always to one side or beneath, and all the while those slashing hands, at the end of the long loose-swinging arms, were

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

cutting and tearing his face to ribbons. *One-two, one-two, one-two,* they went, and each impact opened a gash in the big man's face.

Captain McGuire was not a hard hitter, in fact he struck not a single heavy blow, but each punch was like a sword thrust, and blood was sure to spurt from where it landed.

Soon Malley, game and still full of fight, but bloodblinded and breathless, was reeling drunkenly about the room. All his years of ring experience had availed him naught, and with his face a mass of bleeding pulp he stood helpless in the center of the forecastle. *Smack-smack, smack-smack, smack-smack,* went the hands of One-Two Mac, and Malley slid to the floor.

Higgins, one ear partly ripped from his head, his left eye closed by a blow that had raked open the brow above it, and his cheeks sliced and torn as if by dull knives, was trying to stanch the flow of blood from a score of wounds. The two Spaniards stood grinning evilly. The Barbadian looked down from his perch and felt reminiscently of his own healed scars. He knew the feel of those stabbing hands. The beach-comber was crouched in the peak with his eyes round and horror-stricken.

Mr. Tenny, his patriarchal, benevolent face hiding the soul of a born trouble-maker, put his head tentatively in at the door, and becoming assured by what he saw entered. He glanced at Malley lying in his own blood on the floor and then at Higgins and his faded eyes were gloating.

"Well," he said in his thin voice, "well. Trouble, eh? Tried to git down to help ye, cap'n, but couldn't make it. Nope, couldn't make it."

He was rubbing his hands gleefully.

"No, of course you couldn't," said the captain with a sarcastic curl of his lips. "You like to arrive in time to count the dead."

"Heh, heh, what d'ye mean——"

"Never mind."

Captain Mac silenced the hypocritical little man with an impatient gesture and turned toward his namesake huddled in the peak.

"Here," he said to the mate, "bring that—" he was at a loss for a word and merely pointed impatiently—"to my room."

He swung on his heel and left the forecastle.

TEN minutes later the mate appeared at the captain's door, ushered in the cringing McGuire and was about to follow when the master stopped him.

"All right, Mr. Tenny," he said, and he waved the mate not to enter. "Thank you," he called after him as he grumbled his way down the passage.

Captain McGuire closed the door tightly and turned to the beach-comber.

"Well, Dan," he said quietly, "so here you are?"

"Yes, Jim, here I am," answered the other, and he stepped into the shadow and made a pitiful attempt to stand erect.

He wiped his right hand on his filthy shirt as if in expectation of shaking hands but the captain did not offer.

"And you are still the same."

He shook his head slowly and looked with relentless persistence at the cringing form of his brother.

"A coward, a drunkard, a piece of seaport driftwood."

"Better that than a bloody assassin," retorted the other with a touch of anger. "I never harmed any one but myself, but you—why every one that has ever heard your name hates you."

"And fears me," answered the captain with a slightly boastful smile. "Because I'm a man. You are a shirker, a weakling—no one would hate you. I hear that you have been bragging to the crew about your brother."

It was a question.

"No, I have not. I wouldn't shame you. I know you are not proud of me."

"And is there any reason why I should be?"

"No, I suppose not," Dan McGuire said, and he felt of his week-old growth of beard and looked down at his ragged attire.

He straightened his thin shoulders and when he spoke he dropped the uncouth jargon of ships and docks and spoke in the language of his childhood.

"And I can't say that I'm very proud of you, brother Jim. I may be a rotter, but there isn't a man who can look me in the eyes and say that I wronged him. I have been square with every one but myself, but you—you never did a thing in your life that wasn't for your own benefit. You were always selfish and overbearing. When we were children together you took my toys

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and shoved me in the background. I ran the errands while you amused yourself with the playthings I had bought with my few pennies.

"After mother died I became the chore boy, and slaved about the farm while you strutted around in my best clothes. Great things were expected of you—with your arrogant, selfish aggressiveness—but I was merely Dan the ne'er-do-well, the weakling. When father failed and money became scarce it was you that remained at school. I went to work and helped pay for your education. It didn't matter about Dan. You joined a nautical training ship, bullied your way through and got your papers, but the best that I could do—with no education—was to go deckin' on a rotten old fisherman.

"Now you are a master, with a part interest in your ship and money in the bank. I am Dan, the beach-comber. Life has been easy for you, but to me it has been a curse. I wish it was over."

His face was working pathetically, and his eyes were wet.

Captain McGuire wet his lips and hesitated, and then his domineering nature asserted itself and he spoke crisply.

"It is the survival of the fittest," he said. "The world has no place for weak sisters. If you only had some manhood in you—a bit of fighting spirit—I could help you, but as you are——"

He shook his head disgustedly.

"All our family were fighters—on our father's side, I mean. Father or grandfather would have licked a dozen Malleys. Mother was different—quiet and mouselike, and always being trodden under foot—like you. I would like to help you, if you deserved it. Show some spirit—hit the bosun, or even old Tanny, it doesn't matter, or start a mutiny if you wish—I don't care.

"But whatever you do, be a man. The idea of a McGuire groveling before a cowardly lime-juice deck scrubber! You disgust me!"

He kicked savagely at the bottom drawer of his desk and rose to his feet.

"I don't want help," said Dan. "I won't live long, I feel it here," he tapped his chest lightly with his fingers, "and I'll die as I am—a rotter. But always remember that I have had a hand in helping you on to whatever success you may have."

Captain McGuire frowned and bit his lip, but his angry retort was interrupted by a knock at the door. In answer to his query the door opened and the third mate put in his head.

"Isle de Grande light on the four points, Captain," he said. "Ten fifty-two."

"Very well, sir," answered Captain McGuire, and he reached for his hat. "I'll be on the bridge myself to see her come abeam."

Those of the sailors who were off watch slept peacefully in the forecastle, but there was no sleep for Dan. Above his sleeping ship-mates, on the iron-decked forecastle head, he paced steadily back and forth, and his mind was a black, stagnant pool of self-loathing. He was tired and sick at heart, and he gazed often over the side, down into the abysmal depths of the rolling Caribbean, in silent meditation.

Why had he decided to ship with his brother? He asked himself the question and could not answer. Why had he risked stirring up all the old feeling of resentment he had always felt toward his elder brother? Why had he placed himself in a position where comparison was so easy?

His tortured mind drew him often to the rail and the seething water tempted him almost to the breaking-point. The harder he thought the faster he paced, and soon a plaintive voice, coming up through the open ventilator between the eyes, halted him.

"Aw sie, mite," it pleaded, "cawn't ye let a couple uv poor blokes sleep what wants ta forgit dey aint got no fices to go ashore wit?"

Dan stopped his walking, sighed heavily, and went below.

JUST sixty-two hours after passing the Colon breakwater the *Hawk* steamed into Port au Prince harbor, and after opening the ranges a bit to the northward, let go her anchor. She backed, straightened out her chain, and then swung slowly in the warm, sticky breeze that blew out from the Cul de Sac. The Port au Prince smell, a mixture of marsh, decayed vegetation and putrid fruit, and rank with the germs of the dread yellow fever, is like no other in the world, and on this particular morning it hung heavily over the miniature pea-green bay nestling in the trough of the gray-blue mountains.

A school of flying fish playfully skimmed the tops of the small riplets, and a Portuguese man-of-war, with his two inch leg-o'-mutton sail set to catch the off-shore breeze,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

sailed slowly by on his journey out to the Windward Passage. The bay, sparkling in the morning sun, was like a stretch of green corduroy.

The flying fish, suddenly becoming frightened by something beneath them in the emerald depths, skittered madly off toward the shallow water of Lamantine Point. A triangular fin sliced the water in pursuit and as a number of the fish slipped back into the water to re-wet their flying apparatus there was a flash of white belly, and they flew no more. The shark, a great white one of not less than twenty feet, gave up further pursuit as hopeless, or else was too lazy to continue, and turned easily in his own length.

He swam languidly for a while, and then, as at a sudden thought, he jerked his body and slid through the water at marvelous speed toward the strange little vessel lying in the harbor. He knew that there were dainty morsels to be salvaged from a ship's refuse which were extremely satisfying to his voracious appetite.

The pilot boat, with the black Haitian pilot at the tiller in the stern sheets, had just shoved off from the dock and was being pulled by two drowsy negroes in the direction of the *Hawk*.

Malley, with a landman's curiosity, was watching the approaching boat from the waist, and in order to get a better view climbed to the rail. There was a single whip, reeved through a sheeve in one of the forward booms, which had been rigged in order to suspend a wind-sail over and into number one hold, and the iron hook, free and swaying slightly in the breeze, hung near the sailor balancing himself on the rail. Malley saw it, grasped it with one hand and with the braggadocio of a near-sailor put his weight on it and leaned half his length beyond the rail.

Lopez, hanging lazily on the rail with his inevitable cigaret, glanced casually at the fighter doing his foolish tricks and then turned again to studying the green water washing gently against the ship's side. As he watched, a long white form flashed suddenly into view, circled once and then with a backward flip of its tail stopped stock still directly beneath him.

The Spaniard stared, frowned, glanced again at the big fighter on the rail and then smiled. With his eye he followed the slender Manila whip to where it ran through the block at the boom head and then down to the foot of the foremast. There it was made fast by several turns about a belaying-pin at the pin-rail. Lopez flipped his cigaret far out over the water, smiled knowingly at the man-eater floating just beneath the surface and strolled casually to the foot of the mast.

Leaning back against the pin-rail he turned and swept the deck, bridge and forecastle head with his small snake-like eyes. With the exception of Malley there was no one in sight.

Malley, happening to glance downward, caught sight of the graceful gray body floating beneath him and cried out excitedly.

"Look here," he called. "Lookit de big fish. What d'ya tink it is?"

"Shark," answered the Spaniard calmly. "A man-eater."

He moved quickly.

"My Gawd!"

The fighter gulped fearfully and endeavored to swing his weight back over the rail, but he was too late. The line was slack in his hands and as he threw his weight upon it it ran freely through the block. With a scream of terror he hurtled downward and landed in the water almost atop the waiting shark.

The huge fish, startled by the sudden splash, darted off, but when at what he thought was a safe distance he turned and stared back with his beady eyes. He circled slowly, gradually drawing nearer as he swam, and then deciding that there was nothing to fear, and that his hunger could no longer wait, he settled himself for the smooth rush that would drag the fighter, maimed and helpless, beneath the surface.

Malley, insane with fear, thrashed mightily and with his finger ends tried to claw himself up the slippery wet plates of the ship's side. Lopez at the rail, lighting another cigaret, glanced down at the frantic man and grinned. The pilot, aroused by Malley's cries, took in the situation at a glance and urged on his rowers. They responded with a will but the boat was still a trifle too far away to be of immediate assistance.

Suddenly, just as the shark was about to begin his death-dealing dash, a dark form, coming in a clean dive from the bridge, shot downward and cleaved the water between Malley and the man-eater. It was Captain McGuire, and as he arose to the surface he was seen to have in one hand a long double edged knife. His lips were smiling grimly

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and in his eyes shone his old love of battle. With man or shark, a fight was a fight to One-Two Mac.

Dan McGuire, brooding in the stuffy forecastle, through the open door had seen his brother climb to the bridge rail and dive. Amazed he sprang out into the waist, raced to the starboard side and looked down over the side. There he saw a sight that made him at last proud of his brother.

Captain Mac was treading water just beyond the struggling and fast tiring Malley, and was calmly awaiting the rush of the shark which was about to launch itself at its new adversary. Its shining fin sparkled for a moment above water, then it dived and headed straight for the dauntless captain. When directly beneath him it turned and its white belly flashed in the sunlight.

At that instant Captain Mac forsook the surface, and turning head downward he dived directly at the white stomach with his knife. The shark, slightly bewildered by the captain's sudden aggressiveness, swerved slightly and passed on, but there was a yawning rent in his sandpaper hide where Captain Mac's knife had pierced and slit.

The captain, whirled backward by the impact of the thrashing tail, collided heavily with Malley, who, never at home in the water, and now rendered almost helpless by fright and exhaustion, grasped him frantically about the waist with both arms.

"Let go, you fool," cried the captain. "Dya hear? Let go! You'll kill us both!"

He rained blow after blow upon the prize-fighter's face, still disfigured by the marks of his cruel beating of two days before, but the great arms only tightened and crushed him closer.

Dan McGuire straddled the rail and alternately blubbered with fear and screamed at the fear-crazed Malley.

"Let go, let go, let go!" he shrieked, but the pugilist was deaf to commands and threats alike and his only thought was to keep the captain between himself and the shark's bone-crushing jaws.

The man-eater whirled and with a trail of gore in his wake came again to the attack. Dan, crazed by a sudden mad determination, leaped to his feet upon the rail, and with a curse, half in anger, half in fear, sprang clear and landed with an awkward splash square in the path of the oncoming white body.

The pilot boat, under the impetus of an extraordinary spurt by the two brawny negroes, shot in between Dan and the two men struggling at the ship's side. The two, the captain still entwined by the arms of the seaman, were hauled swiftly over the gunwhale, and the pilot quickly leaned against the vessel's side and gave the boat a shove in the direction of Dan.

They reached his side and the two black men reached over, and catching him beneath the arms exerted all their strength in an endeavor to lift him clear. There was a flash of white, a flicker of scalpel-like tines and an agonized scream. When they dragged him in, the water sparkling in the morning sun was red.

THEY laid him on the deck in the shade of the starboard rail. His leg was torn off at the thigh and he was dying fast. His chest rose and fell convulsively and his tired mouth was twisted hideously with pain. As Captain Mac held him in his arms the beach-comber's body went into horrible contortions and he wrenched convulsively at his brother's coat.

He looked up, and though his pain-wracked face was ghastly his eyes smiled.

"Good-by, brother Jim," he gasped. "I'm proud of you."

Captain One-Two Mac's hard features were softened and his intolerant eyes were moist. He drew his fast-sinking brother closer in his arms.

"Good-by, Danny boy," Captain Mac said with half a sob. He whispered low. "You're a McGuire, and a better man than any of us."

The hot black eyes looked into the meek brown ones and smiled with an understanding that came too late. One-Two Mac looked up defiantly at the small circle of rough but sympathetic seamen.

"He is my brother!" he said proudly.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

FREE WATER

ROYCE BRIER

FREE WATER
THE DESERT AINT WHAT IT USE TO BE
GAs 42c
OIL ACCORDING
EXPERT REPAREING
AXILS, TIRES TUBES & ACCESSORYS
WELCOME TO SULU
MEET THE SULTAN AT
JIM CASWELL'S GARAGE

SULU is two hundred miles from Los Angeles as the buzzard flies, fifty miles from water and a million, or so, of the light-years the astronomers talk about from a fresh egg. Imagine a brilliant daub of yellow, a red-hot stove and the barrenness of a billiard ball. Merge the concepts and that is Sulu.

Ling operates the restaurant there. He agrees with Jim Caswell, that the desert is not what it used to be, but for the matter of that, so do all of the twenty natives.

The natives advance as their reason for, and proof of the desert's fallen state—automobile tourists. The tourists don't agree with the natives. They decline to believe that the mercury swam higher in 1890, and they are unable to conceive that a broken axle is many jumps in luxury ahead of sitting in the sands while a locoed burro makes off for the horizon with the remaining water-bottle.

It may lie in the eye of the beholder. Perhaps if the tourist tarried he would come to believe that the desert, as an institution, has gone the doleful way of the American barroom, whaling and the New York polls. But he doesn't tarry. Not on your water-bottle! Not while Little Eva is turning two rear wheels.

Lem Calloway, however, tarried. Lem was a tourist from Missouri. He got out of the war when he finally convinced a clerk in Washington that as a soul-satisfying spectacle, the Rhine was Niagara Falls and two Grand Canyons behind the Missouri at Boonville. Arriving in Boonville, Lem made two great discoveries on the same day: That his girl was married forever, and that in California, "it is ever summer, where orange-blossoms kiss the air with rosy fingers, and lazy palm-trees beckon from golden strands."

Lem wheezed into Sulu in the cool of one morning while the mercury was yet 110, and after a night of desert travel. He had four tires in delicate health, a bed-spring, an anvil chorus of pots and pans, a burro and his nerve. Of these, his nerve was his greatest possession, but his burro was far more manifest to the casual eye. Sulu is not unaccustomed to the rare and the racy, but Sulu was jolted out of its sulfur spring-dampened bed-sheets this fair morning.

Meet, then, Messalina, so named, her owner averred, because she was a bad egg. Lem, however, had a very balmy spot in his heart for her, and he extracted the sting by calling her Lina. Lina occupied all of the back seat and most of the floor of Lem's flivver, and she was as much at home there as a Russian wolf-hound in a movie queen's tonneau, and rather more complacent.

She gazed upon the abbreviated outskirts of Sulu with an indolent eye, hung her ash-gray feet over the door, and, as she beheld

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Jim Caswell's garage sign, brayed raucously. She was not the ass she appeared to be; she knew breakfast when it rolled around under her nose.

Before Ling's restaurant Lem stopped, and in sixty seconds every Suluan, and the two-score briefly sojourning tourists, were gathered about to behold the donkey that had journeyed from Boonville, Missouri, in the rear of a flivver. This attention, however, in nowise awed Lina, who brayed without a moment's pause until Lem emerged, sadder, wiser and lighter, from Ling's.

Opening the rear door of the flivver was not unlike turning a switch that shuts off the power from an indefatigable electric piano. Lina calmly clambered from the car and without presage started grazing on a pot of spineless cactus which stood on Ling's porch. No bank robber ever accomplished his purpose with greater expedition, nor left his spectators more in the possession of that hollow and speechless sense of surprized horror, for the cactus was the only vegetation save mesquite between Needles and Ludlow, at which latter spot some one cherished a geranium.

At that moment Ling came from his front door, but not to be struck speechless. He loosed a tirade of Cantonese seldom heard outside of Canton. Lina, however, paid scant enough attention to English, and Cantonese meant virtually nothing to her, whereupon Ling in short order produced a long and lean butcher-knife, and was about to wield it with deadly effect when Lem intervened.

"Heah, John," he snapped, seizing the Oriental's wrist, "don't carve that gal. I'll pay you for her breakfast."

"Five dolla'—five dolla'—five dolla'," Ling shouted, perceiving the possible silver lining to this cloud.

"Five dollars!" exclaimed Lem. "You sure throw the book in this *pueblo* for a measly cactus. How 'bout three?"

"Five dolla'—five dolla'," persisted Ling, vociferously.

"Five dollars is the right price!" said a blustering voice behind Lem.

Lem gave Ling's wrist an abrupt twist, resulting in the fall of the butcher-knife. Picking the knife up deliberately and still clinging to Ling's wrist, he turned to the speaker. The speaker was a large-girthed person with a cantaloupe head, one of those upon whose features is written the assurance that only a philosopher can remain at peace with him.

Lem looked him over thoroughly.

"You travel for a cactus house?" he snorted.

The man's features froze in a cast of affronted rage at Lem's words, but Lem stemmed his roar.

"Where do you horn in at, anyways?" he continued. "I'll give this bird what I think he's got comin', an' no would-be Burbanks asked about it, neither. See?"

At this moment Lem was aware of another adversary. He stepped through the crowd from behind the man Lem had been addressing, and thrust a distorted face supported by a bull-neck at Lem, and met two cold, blue eyes.

"Say, bub," he snapped with no little contempt. "You know who dis gent is? Dis gent's de vice-president of de Los Angeles an' Great Basin Minin' Comp'ny, an'——"

Blug!

The informer, and evidently the bodyguard of the vice president of the Los Angeles & Great Basin Mining Company, lay ten feet away in the hot sands, his two large hands crossed on his heaving abdomen, where they had involuntarily flown as though operated by steam-pistons. Though he had much to say, he was silent from necessity, while Lem carefully dusted the wide-rimmed felt hat which had fallen off during his brief but successful effort.

The crowd, which had been enjoying the argument immensely, as affording welcome diversion in a spot so desolate, was somewhat aghast at its culmination, but noting that Lem still retained the butcher-knife, which he could have used, recognized a lack of hard feeling in its extremity in the victor, and by subtle but unmistakeable murmurs took its stand with him.

At this psychological instant Lina finished the cactus, and brayed. Just as a saw-mill or a boiler-factory can make grinning idiots of wise men, so Lina's bray inundated the murmurs of the crowd until there was nothing left but to laugh.

Even Ling laughed. There was one, however, who did not laugh. Just as Lem was handing the pacified Chinese three dollars and a butcher-knife, he heard a growl at his shoulder. Lem again doubled his fist, but turned only to face the mining

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

official, the latter's aide being still exclusively concerned with his own personal affairs.

"Say, you," cried the mining man, hoarse with fury and shaking a pudgy finger under Lem's long nose, "yer' gonna pay fer this. Get me? I'll break yer —— neck."

Lem lighted a cigaret, and shot a sidewise glance down at the other.

"Naughty, naughty," he said.

The crowd roared, the mining man sputtered in futile wrath, and Lem turned to his car.

The mining man hesitated for an instant, then, as if seized with a sudden impulse, strode to his car, a huge Pearson-Dart, which had been the object of wonder and admiration in Sulu the previous day. His lieutenant, some distance away, was regaining his senses and rising to his knees. With an evil glare at Lem he lurched toward the Pearson-Dart. Ensued there an argument between the two concerning an automatic, which the employer would not give the other, but no one knew of that. The crowd melted away, and the supra-terrific heat of Sulu again occupied the tourists' consciousness.

LEM started tinkering with his car, that eternal employment of the desert tourist, when he was startled almost out of his muleskin-shoes to hear his name. He knew before he could look up who called. Flashed a dug-out in the Argonne, but the stubby youth who approached with greasy out-stretched hand could not be Private Runt Jones.

"Holy dogfish puppies!" Lem cried. "You sawed-off son-of-a-gun, what you doin' in this part of ——, huh?"

"Lem, you elongated rattlesnake chaser—of all the string-beans from San Anton to sweet water, yer' the last I ever figgered seein'. Whatchu doin'?"

"Doin'?" Lem roared. "I'm flyin' through this perdition in a balloon. I'm the only sane bird from KC to San Berdoo. Pipe my chariot."

Steven DeLancy Jones, born near the Kansas City stock-yards, piped Lem's chariot.

"And muh little horse. Name: Messalina. Drinks pop out of a bottle, an' heaven knows she's gotta in this chemical country. As I says, whatchu doin'?"

"Me?" Runt and Lem were still shaking hands. "I'm over here to Jim Caswell's garage. I send the orders to LA. Gimme the name and model, an' I have a axle in on the Santa Fé in three days. Meanwhile, you got the keys to the city, an' don't let no chorus shouters getcher watch."

"Ye're a public benefactor. Boy, I've lamped more blissfully contented birds baskin' in the refreshin' shade of their tin cans waitin' for parts—say, ain't this desert the cat's ear-muffs!"

"Huh?" Runt spoke in astonishment. "Say, buddy, you talk like a tourist. They all give us the razz—but say—" he exploded a deprecatory sniff—"the desert ain't what it use to be. Why, they's a tourist every hundred yards——"

"Sure, sure!" Lem waved his lean hand. "Ye're gettin' money for that propaganda."

"That's no kid. Listen, you shoulda been here in 1890. Bones ever' mile—canteens with bullet holes in 'em——"

"You shoulda been here in 1922. Tires ever' mile—blow-out holes in 'em. Free water! *Water*. Boy, you should drink coffee made from what they called water in them days——"

Runt smiled.

"Where you goin'?"

"Nowheres," Lem replied. "Gonna risk my life an' stay an' chin over Dun-sur-Meuse mud. Boy, what wouldn't you give for a nice cool cup of Dun-sur-Meuse mud right now?"

"Oh, you get over that," Runt sniffed.

"Say, why not stay a week. I got some bachelor's quarters over here that look right out on the finest lava flow an' most shapely cinder cone in the U. S. A. Besides, I'm lookin' for a guy with money. How much you got?"

"Rolling in it, brother, rolling in it. You forget I was in the War? On my way right now to finance the orange business. Now, if you wanna buy some stock in the Calloway Consolidated Citrus Corporation—ten cents now—ten dollars tomorrow—you, being a friend, get in on basement excavations—see my Pearson-Dart over there—I ride that, an' my little horse drives the flivver—drinks pop out of——"

Runt held up his hand.

"That reminds me. The guy in the Pearson is Nealer, the mining-engineer, an' the hard bird with him is Larson. Nealer's got his glim on gold in the Black Panther

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Hills. I ain't stuck on his being around here."

"You and me is brothers," said Lem. "I'm such a long way from being stuck on him that I just massaged Larson for a row of marble morgue-slabs—almost."

"I knew it," returned Runt excitedly. "I heard some tourist knocked somebody cuckoo, an' that's what brought me away from my thieves' den. I might of known nobody in the world but a bird that took two machine-gun nests with a empty sardine-can——"

"Shut yer mug," snapped Lem. "Where's this swell estate of yours? Have you got any water that ain't free? This free water stuff gets on my nerves—the idea, y'understand? Free water—and me comin' from Boonville, where the ol' Missouri rolls by every day in the week almost."

Lem was introduced to Jim Caswell and learned from that worthy wight within three minutes that the desert was not what it used to be. Runt then took Lem to his home of building-paper and wire-screen. After tethering Lina, Lem took a bath in a ten-quart pail, and slept soundly the rest of the day.

Throughout that night Lem and Runt re-fought the war from Camp Funston to the Statue of Liberty. The next night Runt told Lem about his gold mine. He told also of the predacious Nealer, and connected what seemed superficially unrelated: monolithic mohogany desks and haughty office boys in the offices of the Los Angeles & Great Basin Mining Company, and the white bones of certain desert-rats who had not watched their respective steps.

Of course, the subject of the desert came up, and Lem was a bit dubious. The argument that ensued was hotter than the night, which was saying much.

"Boy," Lem would roar, "I stand in the middle of the car-tracks and tell the neighbors these here one-cipher-six Fahrenheit nights ain't like Boonville."

"Not so cold and raw—no," Runt would sniff. "An' the moon ain't buried under a five-ply cloud. But outside that it's night, ain't it? It follows the sunsets just like in Boonville. And say, ain't our sunsets pretty good for a small town?"

Who can confute argument of that color? In forty-eight hours Lem was enthusiastic over the prospect of gold in the Black Panther Hills.

Sulu lies in the center of what was once a stupendous crater. Far to the north lies Death Valley; far to the south crouch the Black Panter Hills, weird and malevolent mountains of lava, the old guard that dies, but never surrenders to the timeless siege of erosion. Warm magenta-velvet are those mountains in the dawn; grim, ashen-gray in the pitiless pouring of the midday sunshine; but cool lavender deepening to purple as the colossal wings of night beat in upon the ephemeral twilight. Far and impersonal, soft and wondrous—ah! There is the ever-living lure of the desert—evening!

LEM and Runt started from Sulu the next week. Runt had once staked a claim in the Black Panther Hills, and Lem was grub-staking them. Three hundred dollars had done it, given them their supplies and a month's provision, equipped the flivver with new tires, and equipped the new tires with rope-winding. It also purchased a trailer, but not one so large but that Lina was exceedingly annoyed by an extra barrel of water in her rear seat.

It was a violet night, ineffably hot, but contrasted with the day preceding it, a refreshing one. The first hour the prospectors made six miles, and the next five. Here they reached the end of the road in the basin of a great dry lake. Twice that night they were stalled in sand, and forced to deflate their tires. At dawn they could make out the smoke from the Los Angeles Limited, westbound, swinging like a gray balloon against the shimmering white of the valley floor.

They slept. Late in the afternoon they went on. They broke a spring, but your seasoned traveler in the desert is prepared for such incidents. The spring job, however, had to await daylight, and it was noon the following day before they got away. By the following morning they had accomplished ten miles, and the next day saw them well up on the smooth lava flow at the foot of the Black Panther Hills. They had run fifty miles in five days. No longer was the pencil mark of a railroad in sight, nor any blemish in the mighty yellow bowl that swept out to an intolerable monotony of nothingness.

"Between them two hills," Runt said, "is a dry wash. I looked it over last year, an' figgered a flivver could cut the mustard.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

We may have to move some lava rocks. Three miles through is Sheep Hole Springs. The water's sulfur."

"Water!" ejaculated Lem. "I s'pose it's free water. Say, buddy, when I go over the pond to fight another war they can dip the ocean up for drinkin' purposes an' I won't know nothing about it."

They reached Sheep Hole Springs that night.

Beyond Sheep Hole the mountains are rent by a circular basin ten miles in diameter, the dry bed of an ancient salt lake. On the far rim, Runt said, was Castener's Well, which was dry.

"They sure got some delightful resorts in this country," said Lem. "This well right here's dry far's I'm concerned. Whew! Ain't that a sweet drink? Muddy Missouri, I shu' love you mud!"

Runt guffawed loudly, which induced Lina to an asinine aria which echoed appallingly in the infinite silence. That night Lem and Runt sang "Sweet Adeline," and "He Rambled All Around" as they gazed at the stars twenty or thirty feet above them, and Lem confessed that Boonville had never known such a night as this one.

The next day they reached Castener's Well. There they camped, loaded the patient Lina and deserted their flivver and their heavier supplies to return another day. They had but twelve miles to pack in to Runt's claim, and planned to come out once or twice for supplies.

The story of the discovery of gold in the Black Panther Hills is not this story. It was related in the newspapers, how a donkey of the name of Messalina exercised her sacred prerogative of contumacity, and kicked a piece of quartz in her master's face. No, this is a story of water, for gold is but rubbish; free to him who would have it, while water——

LEM emerged from a wash and rounded a shoulder of lava. He stopped abruptly. He said nothing, but his lean hands involuntarily clutched at his side, and his blue eyes glittered coldly, like a slate roof on a frosty morning. Runt, who was behind with Lina, looked up, startled. And as he gazed, his eyes bulged and he growled hoarsely, like a stricken beast, for he it was, before Lem, who read the significance of what they saw.

Lem's flivver would never turn another wheel. A score of feet away, blackened and wrecked by fire it stood, this piece of machinery which had throbbed so faithfully for them. The butt of threadbare vaudeville jokes, yet capable of clogging strong men's throats with terror, now that it was silent for ever.

"God!" cried Runt, running toward the wreck. "Heat—exploded the tank—the——"

"Heat ——!" snarled Lem. "The water-barrels are all gone!"

Runt stopped as though he had been seared by a bullet. He nodded silently. Then he straightened convulsively.

"Tracks!" he exclaimed.

They were plain enough: deep gouges in the salt-crusted sand where a car had turned about, and tracks of a huge tire. The men shot swift glances at one another, and each silently spoke the identical word. Runt shrugged his shoulders.

" 'Course, it's simple enough," he said with a crooked smile. "Funny we didn't figger on Nealer more. 'Specially me. I knew just what his bad name for gettin' what he went after for his crowd amounted to in this country. Desert-rats five miles from water-holes that they knew as well as you or me knew where the kitchen faucet was when we was kids. An' always desert-rats which had found pay-ore——"

Lem's eyes were still narrowed reflectively.

"He's bit off too big a chew this time," he said shortly.

"I ain't so sure," returned Runt. "Sweet water sixty miles. Lots of rats wouldn't hanker to be standin' right here in our shoes."

"Well, neither am I hankerin'. Let's ramble right now."

"Hold your mule," Runt admonished. "Ten miles acrost there—to alkali-water—you know what the mercury's gonna stand at two? My guess is 120."

"How about them tracks?"

"Plain enough here," replied Runt, "where the side-thrust of them tires cut through the crust. But on a straight-away a bug-hunter with a reading-glass couldn't follow 'em."

So they stood there and debated, as many partners in the desert have diced with death in debate before. It was decided at length that they must go on. There was

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

nothing to hold them. Even the radiator of the car had been drained. They could stop if necessity pressed them, and await evening. They might cross the path of the big car. Each thought, with guarded, breathless thoughts, of crossing the path of the big car.

They set out.

A mighty saffron sphere, and along its bottom there crawled three tiny figures, specks, no more; insignificant specks in the illimitable golden silence. One of the specks ceased moving, and the other two went on a pace, then they, too, stopped. They seemed to hold this relative position eternally, as if it were a rigid and inexorable thing. Then they moved on. But at length the one which had first ceased movement seemed to deviate from a direct course.

"Guess we better stop till night," said Lem, thickly, and Runt merely nodded and sank to the burning salt-crust, while the burro stood with drooping head.

"How 'bout some water? Better risk 't?"

"Cup—one cup 'piece," growled Runt.

Lem poured two cups of water from the three-quarters filled canteen, and they wet their lips, holding each sip in their throats a long while, like birds drinking at a fountain. Tracks, dim enough at the outset, were nowhere. Lem knew he would never see those tracks again.

"'Nother cup—huh?" Runt barked sharply.

Lem surveyed his companion reflectively.

"No," he said.

Runt nodded in dispirited acquiescence.

They remained there throughout the afternoon, their vitality leaking hour by hour, until finally Runt's vitality commenced to flow in a dismaying stream and he repeatedly asked if evening had come. Lem well remembered those last rational words from his partner, and his own reply:

"'If we *coulda* got out?' By God, I say, *when* we get out. There ain't no fat porpoise like Nealer goin' to plant my bones in the sand, nor yours, neither. See?"

But Lem noted that Runt mustered no reply, and that his stubby fingers lay unflinching against the fiery surface of a lava rock. It was almost evening, and he gave Runt another cup of water, lying spontaneously that he had taken another.

They reached the alkali springs before morning, but at terrible cost in water from their sinking supply. When Runt hung over the trickling, fair-spoken spring in the burning dawn, and stared with hungry gleaming eyes, Lem knew that the hot mists were swimming in his brain in ever-increasing density. That everlasting day they spent in the rocky defile, and in the night passed through it and out upon the lava flow, which inclined in an immeasurable sweep to the valley, glowing white-hot in the mid-morning sun. In this glaring furnace were men, and—water.

"Mud!" Runt cried plaintively, groveling in the sand, his fingers running through it in childish wonder. "Mud! Vourziers mud! 'K out for the whiz-bang, *Serg!*— He got it— Mud's 'a worst 'bout this —— war——"

Runt sobbed dry sobs that shook his thick-set frame. Lem felt that he himself had not long to retain his senses, and he poured half a cup of water and drank it. He was about to pour Runt a full cup from the pitifully meager supply, when to his mild astonishment Runt savagely assailed him for tricking him of his share of the water.

Lem was surprized at his own lack of interest in Runt's incoherent accusations, and when Runt struck the cup from his hand, spilling the invaluable liquid in the sand, the other only stared at it stupidly. Runt's fury subsided as suddenly as it had arisen, his fast-dwindling physical power unable to sustain his mania.

For a long time after that, Lem thought, he lay on the sand. He was supremely contented, and the heat of the midday sun seemed to have diminished. Lina lay beside him, and at times he was at a loss to determine which was the animal's bulk and which the ashen-gray of the mountain.

He thought that Lina was dead, and that he kicked her and she would not move. Yet, ridiculously enough, she brayed. He could see her nose rise in that strange donkey-fashion. She brayed, but she was dead. She would not move. She was dead.

Confusedly that thought persisted. It seemed to him funny that she was dead, but brayed, and he laughed aloud. He could hear his laughter very plainly, each peal like a huge winging saw passing his head. He could see the saws, circular saws, winging by his head, and hear their singing, each time in greater volume, but it was only his laughter.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Then abruptly he knew it was not his laughter; knew that Lina was alive and braying. It became clear to him, his surroundings, his thoughts, everything, like a blurred picture clearing with the sudden focus of the lens. He could not tell why Lina brayed until suddenly he heard a new sound that seemed to grow from the singing saws, and that split the desert wide open, like a cyclopean hurricane.

And he turned to behold, a hundred yards distant, making its swaying way with singing low gears down a lava funnel, Nealer's car, the big Pearson-Dart.

Snatching his revolver, he fired twice, three times, at the car, and a tinkle of glass was followed by a cloud of alkali dust, as the driver jammed the brakes on the car. Lem saw clearly, as he stared stolidly at the dust, how it was. Nealer had prospected just a day too long in the salt basin. Even while this was swaggering in triumph in his brain, he had the wit to drain the canteen.

That saved his life, for it told him to drop from where he was kneeling, a target for the two bullets which Nealer, after a moment of confusion, had sent humming his way. In a moment, he was as wary as a rattler, slipping from lava-boulder to lava-boulder, working his way closer to the big car. Twice Nealer shot at him and each time missed.

"Outa that car!" Lem commanded.

Larson, Nealer's burly lieutenant, leaped out on the far side and fired twice over the hood. Lem waited. When the head came up again he fired. The bullet creased the top of the hood precisely at the spot where the face had appeared, but the man's arm dangled limply over the bumper, his sleeve caught there. Larson had murdered his last desert-rat.

Nealer was crouched on the floor of the front seat. In his triumph it escaped Lem for the instant and he started up from his protecting rock. A pain like a savage thrust of a sharp stick stabbed his shoulder, but he knew it was only a flesh wound. He coolly broke a new cartridge package. This time he filled both revolver and automatic, and with the latter started firing a fusillade into the front door of the car.

"Yer radiator's next," he called.

Nealer did not reply. Lem thought it a trick, and fired a bullet into the radiator. Lem knew the Pearson-Dart assembly, and he knew his angle was just right to avoid smashing distributor coils and generator. Slowly the water streamed from the radiator, dripping, dripping——

Nealer leaped from the car and threw up his hands. Lem arose and started toward him, but Nealer drew and fired. Lem went down with a bullet in his thigh, but as he went down he fired three shots, and the big man collapsed like a hot-air balloon after a flight.

Lem scalded his hands in the dripping water from the radiator, swung them weakly in the air, and bathed his face. His hands grew raw with scalding, but he did not know it. He felt no pain in his leg or shoulder. In all the world there was but that fearful agony in his vitals, that mad need for water. It was a long time before he bethought him of Nealer's water-supply, the barrels stolen from Lem and Runt.

Runt was still alive. Lem tied his foot to Lina, and for once the burro failed in obstinacy. She dragged Runt over a hundred yards of lava rock and sand, and Lem bathed him in water, and watered the burro. He never knew how he got Runt, semi-conscious though he was, into the rear of the car. Lina climbed in without a moment's palaver. He cursed himself guturally for damaging the radiator. He felt now that he could have accomplished his purpose without crippling the car.

He gave no heed to the bodies of Nealer and Larson. In a vague way he was aware that in this desert were many white bones to keep theirs company.

Lem drove forty-one miles through the desert in second and low gears in six hours. Two blow-outs failed to halt him, and the shredded tires thumped but did not leave the rim. Somewhere, he knew, he stopped to pour oil into the motor, which smoked from its lack of water supply, but the great car upheld its eight thousand dollar tradition of keeping on—right or wrong. The last mile of the road to the trans-continental highway he drove furiously, engulfed in a cloud of smoke, while the motor roared and crashed in an ever-deepening thunder of protest.

Lem hardly knew when he struck the highway, or that four tourists scattered along as many miles of the highway, seeing the burning car rushing through the desert had stopped to await the outcome of this strange

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

spectacle. He knew that somewhere his motor ceased turning, that when he felt through the haze for the self-starter it was to no avail, for the motor was frozen tight. He cursed it thickly, impalpably aware that men were clambering into the car.

"M' pardner back there's sick," he muttered. "An' get that burro out. See? Get 'er out—out——"

He slipped into a warm, silent darkness.

THAT is about all, except that shortly after his recovery Lem was heard to pooh-pooh the complaints of a tourist who paused at Jim Caswell's garage.

"How do you get that way," Lem exclaimed. "Lookit your seat cushions—lookit that free-water barrel—say, brother, the desert ain't what it used to be——"

Plants on LIFE

by Bill Adams

Immigration

I OBSERVE your remarks with regard to the need of closing the doors upon the immigrant. You're it.

Why in thunder don't we *use* the men we've got?

I've been a common dirty plug of a day laborer for some eighteen years.

When I started in it was under doctor's orders to do no hard work. I was all jiggered up internally. They said I had a bad heart, and lots of other things. What do you do when there's the missis and the kid and no bread on the shelf and nothing to buy it with? Take the first job, I reckon. I broke rock on a hot hillside with a big sledge hammer at scab wages.

Well—lemme tell you this. Hard work never hurt a sound man. It hasn't hurt me much and I am not sound by quite a bit.

I do not believe in the eight hour day. I believe in a working man going to work with a jig in his feet and a bright eye in the morning, or whenever his shift starts. I believe in him throwing himself into his job with the very utmost of his physical and his mental endeavor for seven hours exactly; then home to the folks and a bit of living that we are all entitled to. I've worked many a time a fourteen hour day. I've worked all hours. I know that if our workers were educated aright and treated aright there'd be no need for any more of this hottentot importation stuff. It might just as well be hottentot as what it is. I can show you towns even in the west where you'll go blocks and barely hear an English word. Where every face is dusky.

I reckon we've got quite enough to do right now in Americanizing the ones we have already got here. God knows they need it. Good citizens are not made in the uproar and the trump of war, when every self-seeker is out to patter the Flag on his tongue for the sake of lining his own purse.

Citizens are made in the piping time of peace. Made in the school room and the factory—made in their daily toil, by honest friendly treatment of their employers who have been privileged by the Almighty with a more constructive brain, and have at that same time been given a grim obligation.

There are very few men who won't come to their corn if you call 'em right. I know that. Haven't I been foreman of gangs quite a few times? Haven't I had men hop aloft for me, in dirty weather? You bet—and by the name of God I was man enough to *show them the way by leading them, too.*

Educate—Educate—Educate—to —— with all this gunnery business.

You heard of the admiral long ago who said: "Gunnery, gunnery, gunnery"? Admirals are all right in their way; but I *respect* the skipper of an old rusty wheezing broken-down tramp steamer waddling along through the furrows of the western ocean with a belly full of coals, or 'general cargo.' No bright braid on his cap or arms. No honor (no honor save his self-respect which is the best of all).

—— war! Give me the piping times of peace and honest men who loathe letting a brother's blood.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

A CERTAIN RICH MAN

An incident in the affairs of Mohamed Ali

by

GEORGE E. HOLT

Author of "Chestnuts," "The Master of the Djinnoon," etc.

"His riches shall not profit him, when he shall fall headlong into hell."—El Koran.

MOHAMED ALI was angry. He tingled from the head to the feet of his big brown body, with a wrath which was purely impersonal. Which boded ill for somebody—as does a big brown bear with a bullet hole in its shoulder.

It had come about in this wise:

A week before, one Mustapha, a poor farmer of the Anghera tribe wherein Mohamed Ali lay in hiding from the enemies who sought his head, had received a message from Meknes—which is near the Moroccan capital Fez, that his only brother, Ali Khadoor, lay dying and desired greatly to see him before passing on into that Paradise of the Faithful which his devoutness to the word of Allah assured him. Mustapha had gone at once, had seen his brother die, and had just returned with a tale for Mohamed Ali's ears. His brother had called upon him to make sure that the little property he had accumulated should get safely into the hands of his only child, a daughter, who, by his death, became an orphan. There was a matter of a small mortgage held by one Sid Hallal Shawi, a certain rich man of Meknes, upon his little plot of land, but this could be partially paid, and the current year's crops would take care of the rest of it. But, to cut short a long story, and one filled with lamentations, it had taken Sid Hallal something like three days to bribe *adools* and *kadi* and, by other hocus-pocus, to seize as his own the farm and all other property left by the deceased, and to force the nominal marriage of the girl to one of his own retainers—for purposes of his own.

Now Mohamed Ali was a political outlaw, with crimes enough charged against him to have his head cut from his shoulders a dozen times—yet his conscience was as clear as his mental processes. He looked upon his crimes as virtues by which he would probably profit in the life to come—and his heart was as big as a child's, and as sympathetic. Wherefore, as I have said, he became greatly angry.

"Surely," he quoted from the Book, "'They who devour the possessions of orphans unjustly shall swallow down nothing but fire into their bellies, and shall broil in raging flames.'"

But that was after he had expressed himself audibly and repeatedly in language which was less classical but perhaps even more barbed.

And "*Allah kerim!*" he exploded, again, out of a long thoughtful silence.

"That *kaloof*, that pig, that swine, Sid Hallal, is the same one, by the memory of my grandfather, who twenty years ago defrauded *me* of a small amount! Now I remember. Yes; a matter of twenty pounds! So it is the custom with him. And manifestly he is in great need, for his soul's salvation, of a chastening by the hand of Allah! Yes—is it not written that 'His riches shall not profit him when he shall fall headlong into hell?'

"*A Certain Rich Man*," *copyright, 1923, by George E. Holt.*

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"And, then, shall I, Mohamed Ali, having it in my power to save his soul, refrain from so doing? That would make me answerable to Allah eventually—and assuredly *I* do not intend to appear before Allah to give reasons for letting Sid Hallal go to the fire. Wherefore——"

It was much later when he murmured the rest of the thought to himself, while a gentle smile rippled about the corners of his mouth, as water ripples about a stone in a stream——

"Wherefore I, Mohamed Ali, must become the Hand of Allah to save the soul of Sid Hallal, so that we may meet in Paradise. And perhaps there he may have opportunity to explain to me about the twenty pounds, also."

Now, you should know that the Sid Hallal, who had thus become the unfortunate objective of Mohamed Ali's anger, was a person of no little importance in the world in which he moved. He had been basha of Meknez on more than one occasion, and had grown wealthy, in the first instance, thereby, having possessed a unique gift of extorting exhorbitant taxes from the poor people of his district, while ignoring entirely those who could better afford to pay.

Retiring from gubernatorial affairs with a competence—and while his head was still *in situ*—he had proceeded greatly to augment his wealth by usury, which he termed banking, profiteering, which he termed business, and, in short, by the conscienceless use of his capital for bribery, intimidation, seduction and all other things which might increase the treasure which he kept in his strongly built house.

Thus he became respected, admired and fawned upon by his fellows, who envied him his gifts, as is the way of *this* world—and, as is also the way of this world, flattered himself that he would occupy the same lofty position before the Throne of Allah when his time came to enter into the smiles of the Prophet.

Allah should not be angry—only amused—when those who attain wealth and honor and power by these means try to befool Him by almsgiving and charity—whether it be in the way of public libraries, welfare foundations, contributions to the Aisawa or the Sanussiyah, or whatever the manner in which part of the theft is returned to the robbed. But the fact remains—as has been demonstrated many and many a time—that He *is* angered at such tricks, and that sometimes He becomes impatient with death and suddenly sends a hurried summons which puts an abrupt end to some very important person's strutting about this little stage.

That night Mohamed Ali and four of his men rode swiftly towards Meknez.

THE following day a blind beggar, in filthy rags, and with both eyes hidden by a bandage so dirty as to look as if it had not been removed for years, took up his seat near the entrance to the house of Sid Hallal and began his monotonous wail of *"Alarbil Alarbil"*—Alms, in the name of Allah the Compassionate."

Coincidentally with this, a certain bronzed man who was a friend of Mohamed Ali, although this fact he kept to himself, found occasion to negotiate a small loan from Sid Hallal, during which he made a casual comment concerning the blind beggar, which greatly interested the rich man. But Hallal concealed this interest perfectly, and wished the beneficence of Allah upon the unfortunate one.

As a result of these matters, the blind beggar, in the following noontide, was interrupted in his appeals by the voice of Sid Hallal, who spoke compassionately—and invited him, in the name of Allah, to enter into the house and receive food. As the beggar rose rheumatically and followed his host, a man who squatted across the street got up and walked away in search of three others.

The interest and compassion of Sid Hallal for his unfortunate guest did not cease with the feeding of him, for afterward he sent a servant to bring him to audience with him in his most private chamber. The servant led the shuffling figure within, and retired, closing the door carefully behind him. And, at a command, the beggar squatted down cross-legged upon the carpet before the silken cushions on which reposed Sid Hallal. His begging bowl he placed in his lap, and his face was turned toward his host.

"And why do you beg?" asked Sid Hallal.

"Because Allah wills," replied the beggar.

"But is it necessary?"

"I am blind, as you see," answered the guest.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"But—I am told you carry something of value—besides your begging bowl."

The beggar started, but shook his head in negation.

"I only ask," went on Sid Hallal, "because—because if the thing you carry has value, that value I will give you—in gold."

But the beggar still shook his head, and little lines of annoyance and determination crept in about the mouth of Sid Hallal.

"Moreover," he continued, "*I* care not whence you secured it. Even were it a stolen gem——"

He paused as he observed a look of relief cross the beggar's face.

"In that case—" began the beggar. "But of course I did not steal it. I am honest and live in the fear of Allah, and therefore——"

"Of course! Of course!" interrupted Sid Hallal. "But—let me see the jewel."

"You will give me gold for it?"

"I have said."

The dirty hands of the beggar moved about under the folds of his *djellaba* a little; then he held a hand out toward Sid Hallal, and in its palm, glowing like a drop of fire, lay a magnificient ruby. So beautiful, so valuable, that even the calloused Sid Hallal was startled, and held his tongue and his hand for a moment. Then he reached over and took it, and after another gaze, rose and crossed the room. There he withdrew a huge floor cushion, and raised a big square trap door, covered with fine and tiny tiling, like the rest of the floor. The beggar slowly raised a hand to the bandage across the eyes, then scratched his head energetically, as Sid Hallal, out of habit, looked up from his cache.

"I must examine the stone with a glass," said the rich man, turning toward the light of the window. "It may be worthless."

"Yes," agreed the squatting beggar dryly, "it may be."

"It is as I thought," said Sid Hallal, a moment later. "It is no ruby at all; merely a stone of paste, of which the French make so many these days."

"Worthless?" there was a little wail in the beggar's voice now—and something else.

"Entirely. I can buy one for five *pesetas*—the value of a dish of *kesk'soo*."

"Then give it back to me, and I will go," said the beggar.

"Assuredly," agreed Sid Hallal.

With an amused smile he leaned forward and dropped into the dirty outstretched hand a stone white and lusterless—glass.

But as he leaned back again, the smile faded like a puff of smoke in a wind. One hand of the beggar raised the bandage from his eyes, and the other came forth from the folds of his *djellaba* grasping in an accustomed manner a large automatic pistol which pointed directly at the heart of his host.

"So—" said the beggar, "so—you would steal even from a blind man; aye, from your invited guest."

"I have stolen nothing," protested Sid Hallal, going white, "you have the stone."

"I have *a* stone—a stone worth, as you said, a bowl of *kesk'soo*. But you have a ruby worth forty thousand bowls of *kesk'-soo*."

"I swear—" began Sid Hallal.

"An infidel can not swear," cut in the beggar. "And assuredly Allah knows you not. Besides, do you think *I* would believe either your oaths or your lies? Have you forgotten me? Look well!——"

Again Sid Hallal leaned forward—even though it brought his heart close to the threatening muzzle of the gun, and searched the beggar's face.

"*Allah kerim!*" he cried. "You are—Mohammed Ali."

He cast a frightened glance toward his treasure cache—and then a more frightened one at the muzzle of the unwavering gun confronting him; within that tiny circle eternity waited—and seemed impatient.

"What—" he groaned, and licked his dry lips. "What do you want?"

"*That*," replied Mohammed Ali, "is a business which we now come to—after I have locked this door. Because—although I do not desire to kill you—I trust we shall not be interrupted."

A moment sufficed to secure the massive, carved door against intrusion, after which Mohamed Ali returned to a seat beside the rich man. Then he drew from the *shakarah* hanging beneath his beggar's *sulham*, a small, folded paper.

"This," he said, "is a bill of sale of the property of the late Ali Khadoor, whose daughter, Habiba, you have robbed. This paper will restore it to her. Sign."

For thirty seconds the rich man hesitated—and Mohamed Ali permitted, knowing that the operation of Hallal's mind would be good for his soul.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"I sign," at last said Hallal shortly, and reached for bamboo pen and ink. "But, as there are no witnesses, the paper will be valueless."

He tied two feet of ink-line into the scroll which formed his signature.

"That," replied Mohamed Ali, "is a matter which I shall attend to. Whenever the paper is needed—although I think it never will be—it shall have as witnesses certain names which I think even you will not deny. And the name of Mohamed Ali shall be one. Will any deny the name of Mohamed Ali?"

He grinned at the rich man—but behind the grin flickered a menace.

"An outlaw—a robber—" began Hallal, but Mohamed Ali cut him short.

"All that—and more. But, you will *not* assert that the signature is not mine—or that the paper is a forgery."

"And—if I did?"

The tone in which the question was put, made of the words no question at all.

"Then—although you know, I shall tell you!—then you shall assuredly die swiftly. And that is the solemn promise of Mohamed Ali."

The face of the rich man lost its flush of anger, a leaden paleness crept beneath the skin, and the skin itself shrank white upon the cheek bones. He knew the value to place upon the death-threat from this man. But he knew, too, that this threat would not have been uttered, had his life been forfeit at the present time. Wherefore, after a little, he breathed somewhat easier.

"Allah shall judge your acts in due course," he whimpered, at which Mohamed Ali snorted.

"A pig teaches the nightingale to sing," he observed without politeness. "But in the mean time *I* find it my duty—for the good of your soul, and also for other reasons—to judge your acts myself. There remains yet the matter of the ruby——"

"It was no ruby!" The old man's voice shrilled. "Glass! Nothing but glass!"

"The matter of the ruby," reiterated Mohamed Ali. "Bring it to me."

"Never! Never!" screamed the miser, but he rose quickly as Mohamed Ali sprang to his feet and strode to the treasure chest.

With one arm the outlaw held back the chattering and clawing ancient, while he picked up from the velvet-lined tray, the glowing ruby. Then, holding out the crude glass stone which Hallal had exchanged for the real gem, he asked:

"And this, you say, is the stone I brought?"

"It is. The same stone. Allah! You rob me!"

But his eyes looked anywhere save into Mohamed Ali's.

"Again I ask—to make certain: it is the same stone?"

"Yes! Yes! A stone of no value—" yammered the rich man.

"Very good, then," said Mohamed Ali. "You assure me that beyond a doubt this is the stone I brought. Now, I am no judge of stones. But look you, one thing I do know: the stone I brought was worth at least five thousand dollars. Therefore, as this—" he shook the bit of cut glass in his brown palm—"therefore as this is, as you say, the stone I brought, it is worth five thousand dollars. Which is therefore what you will pay me for it."

"I—I—It is worth nothing. I will pay nothing. It is glass."

"It *must* be a ruby, because I brought a ruby." Mohamed Ali stated the fact quietly, but there was a menace in his voice. "You yourself say it is the stone I brought. You would not lie to me. *I* say the stone I brought was worth five thousand dollars. And I would not lie to you, there being no need."

Now his face grew stern, and his eyes hardened.

"Give me at once five thousand dollars from that treasure chest. I have promised to give that amount to the mosque at Tetuan."

Resistance was useless. Babbling meaningless words, the rich man fell upon his knees and dug into the chest. Shortly he found a package of Bank of England notes, and threw them at the feet of Mohamed Ali.

"Take them, and begone, robber," he snarled. "You shall pay——"

"Five thousand dollars to the mosque of Tetuan." Mohamed Ali cut his speech. "And in your name. Thus shall you acquire merit."

He smiled broadly, and the miser seemed about to bite himself with rage.

"And here is the stone—the priceless ruby," said Mohamed Ali, dropping the bit of glass into the lap of the squatting

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

man. "Guard it well: a thing should be worth at least what one pays for it."

There was a knocking upon the door, and the heavy hand of Mohamed Ali fell upon Sid Hallal's mouth to prevent outcry.

"Tell your servant—if it is a servant—that you are busy, but to send here at once Habiba."

In a quavering voice Hallal complied and the knockings ceased. A few minutes passed in silence, and then came another tatoo upon the door. Mohamed Ali opened it a little, saw a small figure wrapped in a white *haik*, and bade it enter. The girl came slowly, casting quick puzzled looks up at Mohamed Ali, and down at the squatting form of the master of the house. Mohamed Ali rebarred the door.

"You are Habiba, daughter of Ali Khadoor?" he asked.

The girl nodded.

"Then," said Mohamed Ali, "your master here, wishes to give you an involuntary present."

His lips twitched a little and the lines about his eyes crinkled into many little ones. He held out the paper Hallal had signed.

"This paper," he explained, "gives you clear title to your father's property—all of it. It is yours, and I am sure your ownership will never be questioned. Guard the paper well."

"Who—who are you?" the girl asked, as she took the paper.

"Men call me Mohamed Ali."

"Mohamed—Mohamed Ali!" there was a tremolo in her voice—a little fear, and her big brown eyes sought those of the outlaw in a tumult of questions and timidity.

"I—I have heard much—of one Mohamed Ali. But——"

She looked again into the big brown man's eyes, and with a little quick motion thrust the paper toward him.

"But will *you* not keep the paper for me?" The words tumbled over each other.

Mohamed Ali inclined his head, as a courtier might have bowed proudly at a request from a queen.

"I shall guard it for you, little Habiba," he answered, and thrust it into his belt. "And now—do you wish to go to your father's brother, where I also live—at present? Your uncle is a good man: you will be happy with him, I think."

"But—but—my husband," stammered the girl. "*His* man," she added, nodding a swathed head at Sid Hallal.

"Hmph! That is true. I had forgotten. Nevertheless, he will be no worse in Anghera than in Meknez. Therefore, I shall tell him that he rides with us to Anghera tonight. That is—" He paused. "That is, if *you* so wish. Does he beat you?"

A whisper of a laugh came from Habiba's lips, and she shook her head.

"He will make a good husband, I think," she said. And added—with a spice of emphasis—"In Anghera."

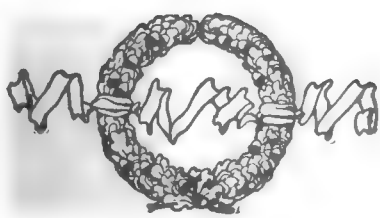
The outlaw's laughter shook the room.

"He waits for you now, no doubt, outside the door?"

"He brought me here."

"Then let us go. My business here is finished."

He took the girl's hand, unbarred the door and cast one look backward. Sid Hallal was still sitting upon the floor, and now he held in his fingers a piece of cut glass. He appeared to be talking to it.



Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

THE THREE PALLADINS

A Three Part Story
Part · II

by

HAROLD · LAMB

Author of "The Road of the Giants," "An Edge to a Sword," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form

"YOUR birth-star, ill-fated one, betokens success to you. Therefore the emperor has decreed your death."

So spoke the Servant of Mercy; but Mingan, Prince of Cathay, threw off the silken cord the executioner had cast over his head, and escaped in a light, hunting-chariot.

At the Western Gate of China's Great Wall he was held until the emperor—bound for the great annual hunt—arrived. Him Mingan pleased by aptly answering questions concerning the history of Cathay and was given permission to ride on ahead of the royal cavalcade.

And so, still seeking to escape from the sinister power of Chung-hi, the emperor's son, Mingan rode on. Making the acquaintance of a young Mongol, Temujin by name, he joined that man and rode in pursuit of a band of Taidjut horse-thieves. Coming up with the Taidjuts, they regained the horses, killing several of the thieves.

They were now joined by Burta—daughter of the khan of the Gipsies—and the three rode cautiously through the cordon of the hunt until, after many days, they came to Temujin's tent-village.

Temujin's father had died and the young warrior was now Khan of the Horde, but most of the khans, not wishing to be ruled by a stripling, refused to give him their allegiance.

Jamuka, Master of Plotting, warned Temujin against Prester John.

"He is your foe," he said, "because he desires to be master of the Horde"

The years passed. Of the five Mongol khans who had remained faithful, three died. Temujin's herds were thinned, and the horses disappeared—apparently stolen by the reindeer people.

"Instead of many enemies," said Mingan, "you have but one. His messengers have taken the guise of other tribesmen. Who can tell his name?"

"At the feast of the desert tribesmen we will make him uncover," answered Temujin.

And then a messenger arrived from Burta warning Temujin not to come to the feast.

"They will kill you," said the messenger, whose name was Chepe Noyon, the Tiger Lord.

He was a Keraik, owing allegiance to Prester John, and was something of a dandy, a singer of songs, and a mighty fighter.

Notwithstanding Burta's warning, Temujin decided to go to Podu's feast. To Mingan and Chepe Noyon he gave gold tablets, making them Palladins of the Mongol fellowship.

"Wherever you go," he said, "you will be honored. You are to command a *tuman* of ten thousand warriors. Are you content? Good. Then do you both choose a hundred to follow you, our swiftest horses, our strongest wrestlers. We ride to Podu's feast."

PODU, seated under a pavilion at the finish line of the racing field on the hard, sun-baked clay of the Gobi, fingered his gold ear-rings and sipped pleasantly the red Cathayan wine, spoil of an excursion before the moon of his feast. For several reasons he was well content with life.

As far as the eye could reach, on one side the race course stretched his wagon *yurts*—black, felt tents mounted on the framework of carts—and the herds of cattle that drew his clans from place to place as his whims elected. His horse herds had never been fatter or more numerous, because the Gipsy wasted no opportunity to trade beasts at the festival, and his trades were good ones—for him. Wagers upon the games, too, had gone his way.

That was one reason for his content. Another was Burta, who sat on a fine carpet behind him. Youths from the distant

"*The Three Palladins*," *copyright, 1923, by Harold Lamb.*

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

tribes of the Horde had come to woo the daughter of Podu, and lay gifts before her father whose choice would decide the matter. Jamuka especially had given freely rare, river-sable skins, gold-inlaid weapons, Cathayan cross-bows, white camel-skins and jewels from the mountain mines of the west.

Podu liked the gleam of pearls and the fire of rubies, and he liked an open-handed suitor, who gave whenever he drank Podu's wine, and drank the more he gave. The Gipsy had just sent a cask to the Jelair's tents that stood opposite, blue and purple pavilions, heavy with silk and topped with long banners. That was another reason Podu found life good. All the khans of the Horde were guests at his board, save Temujin, who, Podu knew, was hard pressed guarding the country of the Three Rivers, to the north.

As soon as it was clear that Temujin would not attend the feast, Podu had heard whispers that if Mukuli, the veteran Tatar would call together a council, a new master of the Horde would be chosen. Podu did not greatly care who was elected by the voice of the council—he would see to it that Burta married the fortunate man, and his own life would be one of ease henceforth.

"Little squirrel," he addressed his daughter, "I see you wear the cloth-of-silver cap, the gift of Jamuka. He looks long upon you; he is a clever soul."

"Aye, that is why you cheat him so easily. Is he not the Master of Plotting?"

Burta went on sampling the sugared fruits in a bowl under her hand; she always gained something from the spoil of a caravan.

Podu looked at her uncertainly. Of late her temper had been like the clear sun of a fair day, and when his daughter was tractable it meant she had a secret that she did not wish him to know.

"If the young Temujin rides hither alone, as he has done in the past," he ventured, "he would be like a lone raven in the company of vultures; he would be a thing made for mockery by these palladins, who have each one a thousand tents behind their standards. If he brings the remnant of his dark-faced Mongols, his herds on the Three Rivers would be plundered, and his pastures taken. Temujin is like an arrow that has sped."

"True," nodded Burta, selecting another dainty. "And yet, O my father, Temujin would provide horses for more races, while now none will match their beasts against yours, so often have you been the victor."

Podu nodded regretfully. He was just about to declare the races at an end, and call for the wrestlers' carpet and the archers' staves. Temujin always matched him closely with horseflesh, especially with the gray pony, and Podu, always provident against possibilities, had a card up his sleeve as it were, that he would have liked to play against the Mongol.

"There will be another race," observed Burta. "Harken to the dogs!"

A clamor of yapping hunting dogs resounded from behind Podu's pavilion, and presently he heard the muttering of kettle-drums drawing nearer on horses, and the clangor of cymbals. He rose and peered out.

Dust was rising behind a cavalcade of riders at the head of whom advanced the yak-tail standard of the Horde, escorted by two youths in brave attire, one very tall, the other slender and small. Behind the standard rode Temujin, in hunting dress, carrying only a light spear beside the sword at his girdle. Podu concealed his surprize and pushed through the throng that gathered to stare at the small body of Mongols, who had announced their arrival by the drums and cymbals.

"Dismount," said the Gipsy heartily, taking the reins of the gray pony himself, "and sit at ease in the shadow."

He called for attendants to bring more wine, fruit and meat, and others to care for the horses of the heroes, and more to set up three-score tents near the Gipsy camp. "Are your herds fat? Is your health good, O my Khan?"

"Fat—and good," nodded Temujin, stooping under the pavilion, and, after a quick glance, taking no heed of Burta. "Have cushions brought for these two *orkhons*, O khan of the black tents, and take your place behind them. They have each the rank of commander of a *tuman*, and you are no more than leader of four thousand."

Podu quivered at the reminder, but, after a moment's hesitation, obeyed. His complacency was ruffled. With Temujin in the camp and in no conciliatory mood, trouble was a certainty between him and the other khans, and Podu fared best when he hitched his wagon to one of the brighter

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

stars. Now his position of host would make it necessary to struggle to keep peace, and, in any event, he would suffer from a quarrel in the Horde. And there was Burta.

He writhed as Mukuli and others drifted in to share the refreshments and pay their respects, in duty bound, to the chief of the Horde. Only Jamuka was absent. And Temujin calmly allotted all who came, places behind his two heroes.

Stimulated by several cups of hot liquor, Podu addressed Mingan, whom he failed to recognize as the Cathayan prince who had come with Temujin to the death tent of Yesukai, owing to the *orkhon's* beard, and long hair worn Mongol fashion, coupled with his rawhide-armor, faced with silver trimmings.

"Where is your *tuman,* O hero?"

"Where it can be summoned at need."

Mukuli was regarding Chepe Noyon with disfavor as the Tiger sat in the place formerly occupied by the Tatar, at Temujin's left hand.

"And where is yours, O maiden cheeks?" he growled.

"I left it at Tangut, by the palace over the sands, O bear's paws," smiled the boy who was not at all slow-witted.

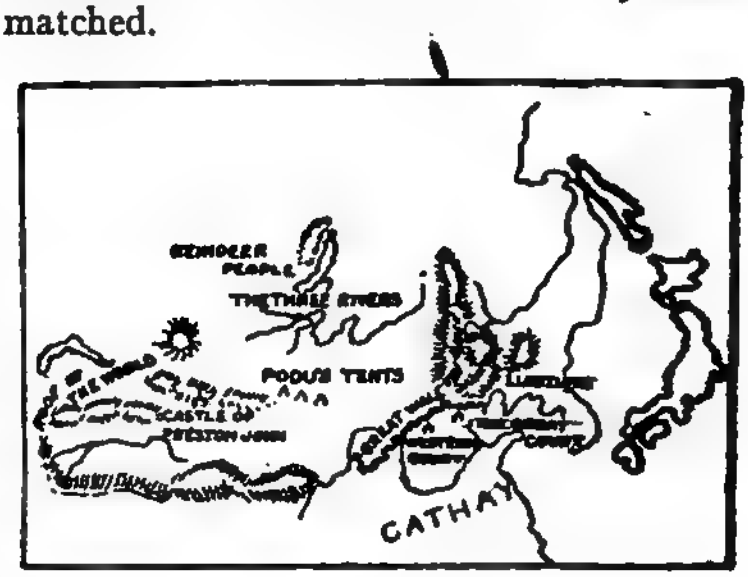
The feasters looked up with interest, and Podu fingered his earrings thoughtfully. He knew Chepe Noyon for a Kerait; the sudden honor shown the youth by Temujin must mean that the Mongols were allied in some fashion to Prester John, and Tangut held the balance of power in the Horde.

"Verily," he asked, "do you draw rein toward Tangut, my Khan—with how many warriors?"

"You have already counted them," responded Temujin quietly, and Podu turned the talk to the absorbing topic of racing. He suggested that Temujin match his beasts, and the Mongol assented.

"Yet, my Khan," the Gipsy pointed out craftily, "your animals are tired from a half-day's travel. So we will shorten the course to the length of six *li.*"

This was about two miles. The usual race of the Mongols covered twenty miles, being a test of stamina, both of rider and horse; three ponies started, for each contestant, matched in pairs, and the ride took several hours before the winner of each pair crossed the line in front of the khan's tent. It was customary to allow a few minutes between each pair, to prevent any confusion as to the order in which they were matched.



"As you will. My ponies are strong and fresh."

Temujin called for three boys to lead from the horse lines the gray pony, the sorrel mare that now bore his *tanga*—branding mark—and a piebald horse of unusual endurance that had won many events in the past.

Podu on his part, entered two black ponies, and a small gelding that had not appeared on the course as yet. The khans scanned this curiously, struck by its unfamiliar marking—white with blackish streaks rising from the fetlocks. It had dainty, small-boned legs, and carried its intelligent head high; its tail was sweeping.

The horse was an Arab, secured by Podu on one of his trading ventures into India, and the Mongols had never seen its like.

Temujin instructed his boys to start the piebald first—it being the worst of the three, the mare second and the gray pony last, in the customary order, reserving the fleetest for the last. Podu arrayed his beasts and sent one of his *gur*-khans off with them to the starting point, a rocky knoll barely visible on the plain. While the visiting warriors, hearing that a race was on, flocked to kneel by the course, the Gipsy turned to Temujin, after sizing up the opened loads of the Mongol's pack-camels.

"You are the Master of the Horde, and bring no gifts to me. It is fitting that we wager worthily on this race. Do you place two camel loads of musk on the first race, a dozen *tarkaul*, white camel's skins on the second, and on the third—" he pondered a moment—"enough weapons, gold-inlaid, and of good steel, to cover this carpet."

It was a valuable stake, and about covered all the riches Temujin had brought with him.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"I will place against your goods," Podu concluded, "silver bars and gold ornaments enough to equal your stakes."

"So be it." Temujin was no quibbler.

A ball of dust out on the clay flat showed that the first pair of ponies were off. The khans crowded forward, to see the better, and Burta clapped her hands. The dust rolled nearer and two black specks grew into the forms of ponies, saddle-less, two boys urging them on with heel and whip.

When they reached the lines of spectators it was seen that Podu's black horse had the lead easily. It finished a half-dozen lengths in front of the piebald, which, coming on in a long stride seemed to be hardly in the race as yet, while the black was sweating.

Chepe Noyon grimaced and turned to Mukuli.

"My scabbard against your sable cloak that the mare finishes first in the coming pair." They were still distant, in the dust.

"Agreed!"

Podu smiled and suggested to Mingan that they also, make a wager. The Cathayan's eyes twinkled and he shook his head. Barely had he done so than the black pony of the Gipsy crossed the line of the tent a length ahead of the sorrel mare, which was closing the gap at each stride. It was clear to Mingan that Podu had trained his beasts over the shorter course, while the Mongol horses were unable to strike a pace that would win in two miles. There was, however, the gray pony, coming between the two lines of men.

Podu shaded his eyes and called to Mukuli—

"My jewelled hunting-saddle against the gemmed scabbard you have just won, that my white horse conquers the gray."

The Tatar nodded eagerly. More than once he had seen the pace of the swift little pony that Temujin prized, and he had observed that the two beasts, for the first time, were reaching the finish abreast. Even the cup-bearers crowded the khans to see the end of the last race.

Temujin's boy was stroking his whip against the mane of the gray, for the pony was trained to do its best without the lash; and Podu's rider leaned low over the arched neck of the Arab. An arrow's flight from the finish, the white pony seemed to take wings—at least it pressed low over the ground and fairly skimmed across the line ahead of the gray.

Temujin clapped his hands.

"Bear the goods to Podu," he ordered his few attendants.

The Gipsy smiled. He liked a good loser almost as well as a liberal giver, and he bowed acknowledgment of Chepe Noyon's tender of his scabbard.

"In your camp," said the Tiger, "I will need no sheath for my sword."

AFTER the feasting was over that night, Temujin came to the *orkhons*' tent, chagrined by the defeat of his best ponies.

"It was an ill thing to make a remark such as yours," he told the Kerait, "to stir up ill-will before the time of sword blows is at hand."

"O my Khan, that is true, yet in my country we strike a thicket with a stick before lying down to sleep near it, to rout out snakes. Yet Podu is not the enemy whose face you seek to uncover."

"Why is that?" Mingan was interested.

"He who thinks of slaying will not have his blood stirred to fever by the racing of swift horses."

Mingan assented to this. He was beginning to realize that the brain which directed the attacks on Temujin was of a higher order than the intelligence of Podu or Mukuli. And he suspected the unknown king, Prester John.

"If you will have Podu race again on the morrow, I can win for you two of the three races," he offered, noticing his friend's moodiness.

Both Temujin and the Tiger were lovers of horse flesh, while Mingan had not this leaning, and they grunted incredulity.

"Have you better horses than mine, O my *orkhon*?"

"Nay, I will race your three ponies and win twice. Ask of Podu naught save that I be allowed to start your horses as I please."

On the morrow, after the dawn trumpet had sounded and the khans of the Horde had assembled, Podu acceded willingly enough to this request, but asked again for a good wager. It was unexpected luck, as he saw it, that Temujin should want a return match—although it was like the Mongol not to sit at ease under a defeat.

In fact the young Khan did not change countenance under the prospect of a second heavy loss.

"So be it," he nodded. "I will stake my

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

three ponies against yours, that the Mongols win two of the three starts."

"The distance must be the same."

"Aye, the same."

Podu hesjtated only a moment. His racers weré trained in the shorter dash, and each one was swifter than its Mongol adversary. He would send along his official to the starting point to see that the ponies were given a fair break—how could he lose?

"The bargain is struck!"

So Mingan led off his cavalcade to the point of rocks, where they dwindled to specks in the plain. This time the khans who were watching made no bets among themselves, believing that Temujin's ponies could do no better than before. The Master of the Horde himself had no great hopes, but he had never known Mingan to make a promise that he did not redeem.

It was hard for him, however, to sit on the carpet and watch the first pair draw nearer on the course without shading his eyes and peering to see which was ahead. He would rather have lost an arm, than the gray pony that he had broken in with his own hand. Harder still, when Mukuli swore vehemently, and Podu chuckled—

"I have drawn the first blood, O Mongol."

In truth it was not so much a race as a pursuit, Podu's pony being a hundred yards in front of the laboring Mongol horse. Chepe Noyon leaned forward and shaded his eyes against the level rays of the rising sun.

"My saddle and cloak against the jewelled scabbard you won from me yesterday that we win two races," he offered quickly. "I may need the sheath—after I have left the dust of this camp behind me."

"The bargain is struck," nodded Podu eagerly. Then, as the ponies came into full view at the finish line he looked puzzled, perceiving what the sharp-witted Kerait had seen before, that the winner was his prized Arab, and the loser Temujin's plugging piebald that could encompass no faster pace than a loose canter.

Still, he reasoned, his second entry had scored over Temujin's new mare, and—Podu was a race in hand.

All at once he sprang up with an exclamation, and subsided into a tense silence. The second pair were entering the stretch close together, but Podu, alert now, saw that Temujin's swift gray was matched against the better of his pair of blacks. He watched the shaggy pony of the Mongol drive forward with drumming hoofs under the touch of the stick its rider carried and sweep past him two lengths ahead of his second entry.

Temujin's face revealed no emotion, but he took up a cup of wine and emptied it with relish. He could not have been better pleased if his heroes had conquered in all the coming games that were so vital a part of the life of the Horde.

A few moments later the sorrel mare won the third race, finding her speed in the last quarter and getting her neck ahead of the tiring black pony. Podu snarled and his hand crept toward his belt, but fell to his side, feeling an empty scabbard—the weapons of the khans were stacked outside the pavilion carpet.

"Trickery!" The Gipsy raged. "You matched your poorest horse against my Arab, and so, undeserving, won the last races."

Temujin had not been unobserving of Podu. He signed to Chepe Noyon to answer, which that youth did right willingly by ripping the scabbard out of the Gipsy's girdle.

"O small of wit," he mocked, "yours was the trick, for you persuaded the Khan to race over a course on which your horses were swifter. Did I hear you grant him the privilege of starting the ponies as he pleased?"

Being wise, Podu swallowed his anger, or rather took it out on the skin of the hapless officer he had sent to the starting point, beating the man with a stick until he howled. Mingan would have dismounted and taken his seat unobserved. The trick of the ponies was a small matter to one who had played at chess with the sages of Cathay; but Temujin signed to him, as the racers were led up to be delivered.

"Henceforth," said the Khan, "you are the master of the gray pony. Cherish him, and strike him not with the whip. It serves to stroke his mane to gain his best speed. Mounted and afield, you can overtake any man; no man can overtake you."

Mingan bowed respectfully as Temujin with his own hand placed the reins of his steed in the grasp of the Cathayan. To Chepe Noyon, the Khan gave the mare, saying that the boy had ridden her in a good cause once, and was privileged to do so

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

again. The Arab he kept, being a judge of horseflesh.

Of those who watched enviously, perhaps only Temujin guessed how important it would prove to the Mongols to have at hand the four best horses in the Gobi.

V

THE MASKED FACE

MINGAN was accustomed to use his ears as well as his eyes, and was gifted with a sense of undying curiosity. He made a point of going about in the crowds that looked on at the games, and so became aware of a whisper.

It was no more than a whisper, although its purport was plain enough.

"The Mongols are no longer heroes, their leaders are unskilled boys who are mock-heroes; they can not prevail in the test of the strength of men."

The source of the rumor was not to be traced, but Mingan suspected that warriors were passing through the ranks of the Horde, scattering the words as they might live coals in the dry grass of the prairies, hoping to fan into being a devasting fire.

But this did not alter the fact that honors in the games went to tribes of the Horde other than the khan-tribe, the Mongols. The Merkets, a branch of the Tatars now aloof from the Horde, won the javelin cast; the Jelairs—fine riders, they—were first in the arrow test; the men of old Mukuli overcame the others in wrestling.

Temujin, if he could have competed, would have been unmatched in archery or wrestling; but the Khan could not take part in the sports of the warriors, custom decreed.

Mingan, while a skilled bowman, found the test too severe for him—to ride at the full gallop of a horse, discharge three arrows from the right side, unstring his bow, use it as a whip, and, stringing it again shoot three more shafts from the left side. This he could manage, but the winning Jelair planted five out of six arrows in a mark placed on a stake as he galloped past; Mingan scored but three hits. Nor could he wheel, on a pony, around a great tree, lopped of its branches and hit, with three shafts out of three, a large crane tied to the summit of the tree.

As for Chepe Noyon, he earned not a single hit, being careless of bow work, loving best his sword play. Temujin knew that he was a skilled swordsman, but Podu, master of the sports, had forbidden contests with bare steel, knowing that they would lead to a killing and fan the old feuds into life.

"Temujin no longer is the victor at the tests," the whisper went on, "he fears to compete now as he did aforetime. His heroes are dead, or have left him. Nothing is left him but his shadow."

The fiery Tiger heard the whisper and lifted his voice in prompt rebuttal. Hands were put to sword-hilts, and it needed all Mingan's diplomacy to prevent bloodshed. He sent a warrior with word to Temujin, but the man returned saying that the master of the Horde was drinking heavily in his tent and would not come forth. By this Mingan knew that one of his black moods was on the Khan, and that he strove to hold his temper in leash. The whisper had come to Temujin's ears.

"Go among our men," he murmured to the Tiger, "and warn them to say no angry word or to draw weapon. The one who is our enemy is starting this talk, to breed trouble. Temujin knows that he must not show his anger."

"Temujin broods because the Mongol wrestlers have been vanquished, with aching limbs and broken ribs. Go among the men yourself, minstrel, and prate of gentleness. I came not here to anoint wounds but to open them up."

Chepe Noyon checked his words, and pointed to where a crowd gathered about the empty wrestling mats—

"Now here is a moil to my mind."

Unwillingly Mingan followed the boy, and the two *orkhons* shoved through the spectators until they paused in surprize.

In the center of a ring of warriors stood a strange figure—a man as tall as Mingan, who stood well over six feet, but broad across the shoulders as Temujin, and as heavy as the two combined, almost. His body was bare save for a white reindeer skin that served as a cloak, his naked arms were scratched and scarred—massive as a bear's; the low boots were tipped at the heel with a deer's hoof, his long, fiery-red hair was plaited instead of falling back, Mongol-fashion, in a scalp lock. Gray eyes, greenish-tinted, gazed at the crowd with no more expression than an animal.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"It is a khan of the reindeer folk," said a Mongol captain of ten to Mingan, after saluting. "He left his beasts and came hither on a camel, to attend the feast from afar, and because of the sun of the Gobi he has ripped off his garments."

The man bore no weapon of any kind. Seeing this, some of the Gipsies were plaguing him.

"He will not wrestle, or hurl a spear. He is afraid," they said.

As the stolid visitor from the frozen tundras of the north made no objection to this statement, the warriors grew bolder. A Tatar champion, almost of a size with the giant, challenged him to a bout at grappling, but the reindeer man shook his head.

"*Ahai,*" growled the Tatar, "he is *subotai*, the buffalo. He stands his ground and lowers his head, yet will not fight."

In derision he pointed out the small pair of antlers that formed the crest of the hood the man wore.

"Subotai!" the others chuckled.

Mingan would have passed on, but just then he saw Mukuli approach with Temujin, and lingered. The old Tatar khan was looking about for trouble, having looked well on the wine cup, and pushed forward, perceiving the towering body of the Tungusi, the reindeer tribesman. He knocked off the cape the other wore, and pointed to his hair, gleaming red in the sunlight.

"*Mao tzel* A red man. Ho, cousin of the tundras, why will you not wrestle my champion, hey?"

"I fear," said Subotai earnestly.

At this a sudden silence fell on the watching throng. For a man in the Horde to confess to cowardice was an unheard of thing; to plead with Mukuli was madness. Yet the red-haired man had acted like a fear-ridden clown—and assuredly he was not mad. Mukuli swept away with his arm those nearest him and strode to a great fire close at hand over which boiled and sizzled in a caldron the sliced flesh of a horse, cooking against the feast of the evening, an hour hence.

Jerking the pot from its supporting stakes, the Tatar wheeled and in the one motion cast it—meat, water and caldron at the giant. It struck full against Subotai's chest, and he roared with pain, while the skin of his body turned red with the sting of the scalding water. Pawing at his face, he staggered, shook his head.

"A little sting makes the Buffalo bellow," chuckled Mukuli, and the crowd shouted approval of his words.

Even as he spoke, the Tatar chewed at his mustache, and with all haste drew his sword—a wide-bladed affair a hundred pounds in weight.

Subotai's eyes had turned red. He snatched at the weapon nearest him, which happened to be the simitar of Chepe Noyon. Yet, measuring the slender length of blue steel in his fist, Subotai cast it down on the sand and probed the throng with gleaming eyes until he spied a Mongol *gur*-khan leaning on the handle of a battle-ax as massive as Mukuli's sword.

Striding forward, Subotai put his hand on the ax, and, although the surprized captain clung to it with both fists, drew it free of the other's grasp as easily as he might have pulled a knife from a piece of meat.

At this the crowd gave back discreetly with huge relish and Mukuli's eyes gleamed with pleasure. It looked as if there was fight in the Buffalo after all. Instead of swinging the ax over his head in both hands, he gripped it half-way up the handle with his right and extended his left in front of him, meanwhile striding toward the Tatar.

Mukuli waited until one of Subotai's feet was midway in a step, and—sure that the giant could not sidestep or leap away—whirled his sword up and down at the outstretched arm. The blow would have sliced Subotai's limb from the shoulder, even as it would have shorn through the back of an ox. It would have done so, that is, if the Buffalo had not checked his stride and let his arm fall to his side.

The sword of Mukuli whistled through the air, grazing his chest, and the blade was buried deep in the sand a yard in front of the man of the reindeer folk. Seeing this, Subotai completed his step forward, but placed his booted foot on the sword of his adversary and gripped Mukuli's right wrist with his left hand. Instinctively the Tatar tried to pull free.

While he tugged, Subotai's ax chopped down sharply. Mukuli thrust his head forward and the blade of the ax rang on his bronze cap, glanced down, sliced a segment of the rawhide armor off his shoulder, along with a goodly bit of skin.

"Hey," chuckled Chepe Noyon, "the Buffalo can gore."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

It was Mukuli's turn to roar with anger, and, dropping his sword-hilt, to spring at his foe. Subotai let fall the ax and planted his legs firmly in the sand, meeting the rush of his foe with the weight of his body. The two warriors grappled, and the gray eyes of the Buffalo glinted with pleasure.

He let the veteran maul him for a moment, while he worked his arms free and encircled the other's body. His arms tightened and presently Mukuli's writhing ceased. A bone in the Tatar's body cracked.

And then Temujin put an end to the fight. He had gone to the fire and pulled out the blazing branch of a tree. With this he smote the taller man over the eyes, knocking his head back and searing his flesh.

Subotai slid to the sand and Mukuli, dazed by the blow on his helmet, got back his breath with difficulty, investigating the while the damage done to his ribs. Then he recovered his sword, wincing at the motion, and surveyed Subotai in mild amazement.

"If you have let out his life, it was ill-done, Temujin," he observed sullenly. "Another moment and I would have strangled him."

"Another moment, Mukuli, and you would have been quaffing the cup of greeting with your ancestors in the sky-world."

Temujin ordered his *gur*-khan to see that the unconscious fighter was brought to his tent on a litter and set down by the fire.

When the man recovered consciousness, the Mongol khan, the Tiger and Mingan were sitting beside him.

"What brings you from the snow circle, O head of fire?" Temujin asked.

"Enough of fire," smiled Chepe Noyon, "has he had on his head to suffice him for the rest of his life, which will be short if Mukuli gets a second chance at him."

Subotai however seemed to take all that happened as a matter of course.

"I know not the customs of your Horde, O Khan!" he vouchsafed. "If you feed a guest with the pot itself, and put him to sleep with the fire, it is all one to me. But if I ask for a drink, and you ram the cup down my throat I will not stay any longer."

Chepe Noyon chuckled, but Temujin scanned the injured man seriously. He watched Subotai shake his head, brush the ashes out of his eyelids, and empty the goblet of wine Mingan gave him.

"Another," instructed Temujin.

But as Mingan was about to refill the goblet, Subotai climbed to his feet, apparently little the worse for his harsh treatment.

"If you are giving me wine, do not trouble yourself with that child's cup. I will take the cask."

"Give him the cask," nodded Temujin.

It was a gift of Podu, half-empty, true enough, but when Subotai had taken it up and poured liberal libations to the four quarters of the sky, there still remained enough to fill a half-dozen goblets. However, the big man raised the edge of it to his lips and began to tip it higher.

Chepe Noyon listened to his swallows.

"He drinks like a captain—like a colonel of a thousand—nay, like a hero. By the hide of Afrasiab, the keg is empty! We must go to Podu's tent or eat with dry gullets this night."

"Good!" said Subotai with a hearty sigh. "Let us go to the tent of this Podu."

"Only the khans sit at the feast," remarked Mingan, "and you have neither rank, nor weapon, nor horse, nor standing in any tribe here."

"I came, O Khan—" the Buffalo bethought him of Temujin's question—"from the reindeer country because word came to me that riders who left the tracks of our boots were in the southland and I meant to herd them back, because we are at peace with your Horde, which is well for you."

"Have you found your riders?"

"Not a hair of their hide, O Khan. I turned my steps to this place, but no men of mine are here."

There was no doubting the truth of the man's statement, voiced slowly as if he thought over every word. Mingan reflected that others than the reindeer people had left the tracks of hoofs in the snow when the Mongol ponies were stolen.

"What rank have you with your own people?" demanded Temujin.

"A smith, O my host, and the son of a smith. I can beat out on the anvil and weld the strongest axes."

"Yet you do not carry one."

"I feared to do that, coming into the Horde."

"And you feared to wrestle," assented

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Temujin, puzzled. "Why? You were not afraid of Mukuli, whom no man of the throng—save myself—would have faced when he was minded to kill, as then."

Subotai cracked his thumbs uneasily.

"O Khan my nature is weak. It is my nature when a warrior wrestles with me or we play with swords to grow angry. Then the red comes into my eyes, and I kill the other. I can not take part in the games of the khans; it is better to make weapons."

After pondering this Temujin looked up.

"If I name you, O Buffalo, my sword bearer, and give you a weapon like Mukuli's brand, will you serve me in all things and be faithful? Mine is no easy service, and there will be more blows than gold pieces."

"I see that." Subotai, in his turn, thought the matter over. "The wine is good, the meat is plentiful. Your men obey when you speak. All that is as it should be. I will take you for my khan. But I do not want a sword. Give me the ax I took up, and I am your man."

"Granted, and the big piebald horse shall be yours—Mingan see to it this hour. We will need horses before this moon is older. Chepe Noyon, and you, Subotai, come with me to Podu's feasting pavilion."

Subotai grunted with pleasure. Although they had not seen him before that hour, the Mongols felt that, his assurance given, Subotai would be faithful to Temujin. Mingan, knowing the khan's ability to judge men and attach them to him, suspected shrewdly that Temujin meant to form an alliance with the reindeer folk through Subotai. He was only sorry that they would attend the feast that night. Temujin, however, had not seen Burta in the camp for the last two days, and Mingan knew that although he did not speak of it, the girl's absence troubled his master.

THE moonlight cut clearly through the dry air of the desert, and a warm breeze stirred the tent sides as Mingan left Subotai's new horse at the entrance of a small *yurt* between his own tent and Temujin's, and turned his steps toward the high pavilion where the warriors were feasting on this the last night of the concourse.

Yet as he went, with bowed head, the Cathayan heard a whisper other than the note of the wind—an almost inaudible murmur that came from the shadows where men sat unseen, and followed after him. So, coming into a darkened lane between lines of the Gipsy wagon *yurts*, Mingan stopped and waited, his eyes alert, his hand on the ivory hilt of the hunting-knife he always carried concealed in the folds of his girdle.

Standing so, he sniffed at the smoke that drifted from the fires, scenting the faint odor of the sun-warmed sand, listened to the movements of the horse herds—sampling the sounds and smells of the night, for he little expected to see that which followed him. He was being followed, he knew. But, after resuming his course and twisting among the carts, he felt that he had shaken off whoever might be on his track.

After convincing himself of this, he sought out the wagon where Podu's women slept, keeping still to the lane of the shadows. He was now directly behind the feasting pavilion, where all the khans of the Horde were gathered. Mingan wanted very much to know what had happened to Burta, and he meant to find out. The girl had warned Temujin of danger, in the black tents, and now the daughter of Podu had disappeared.

By pressing his ear close to the silk wall of the *yurt*, he could hear the lisping of Gipsy women's voices, but could not make out words. Mingan had unlimited patience, but his time was short. Presently he might be missed if any one in the pavilion should happen to call for a song or story.

So, taking out his knife he slit the silk noiselessly and pried open the slit with two fingers. Darkness. Mingan sighed, and felt upon the ground with an exploring foot. Turning over a stone, he picked it up, and tossed it over the wagon, hearing its impact on the earth on the far side.

The whispering within ceased as if by magic. Then a woman spoke, and flint was struck against steel until a light flared up and a candle was lit.

Mingan saw several old women, all looking warily toward the *yurt* entrance. He saw, too, Burta almost under him, propped up on cushions, her limbs bound tight to her slender body by veils, a fan thrust through her teeth and bound fast to gag her.

"A dog," muttered one woman, "made the noise. Are not Podu's men all about us, on this night? No one could come to that side of the wagon."

"Wine flows," observed another, shaking

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

her head, "and when it does who can trust the guards? I shall be glad when the night is past and Burta is still here, under our charge. Otherwise—for us the whipping-post."

Burta turned her eyes toward them and twisted angrily in her bonds. Mingan dared not speak to her. Besides, he had learned something. Podu expected fighting that night. It could be no trouble of Podu's making, or he would have sent his women away into hiding in the desert.

He was waiting to hear more, when he released the tent wall and dropped to the sand, rolling under the wagon. Near him—he did not wait to discover where—sounded the muffled footsteps of men. Against the tent his form would have been outlined clearly.

The men, two of them, drew close and stopped, their boots within reach of Mingan's hand. Lying so, he could make out, against the luminous sky, that one was as tall and broad as Subotai. In fact this one seemed to have a head the size of a wine cask—a roundish head, gleaming at the top with jewels. The other, too, had something queer about his face. It did not look like a man's face, yet the voice that came from it was undeniably a man's.

Mingan listened attentively but the two were speaking in a dialect he did not know. Round Head had a shrill voice, Mis-shapen Head whispered. Every one in the camp was whispering, it seemed, that evening. Presently they moved away a little and Mingan started to roll out from under the wagon, to follow.

Then the smaller of the two said distinctly:

"If Temujin leaves the pavilion alive, he will not leave his tent so. Go to the riders, bid them see to their horses and await my command."

Whereupon the speaker glanced at the lighted tent, made a sign of caution to his companion and drew away.

Rising, Mingan went after them, out into a space bright with moonlight. Still in shadow himself, he coughed deliberately. The pair turned to stare behind them, and he saw that the bigger man had a round, black face, surmounted by a wide roll of white cloth; the other had no face at all.

That is, no human face. Over head and shoulders was drawn the skin of a bear, the jaws propped wide, the teeth gleaming. His eyes seemed to penetrate the darkness in which Mingan stood. He clapped his hands softly, and Mingan heard the rush of feet behind him.

A second time he threw himself on the sand as a man's legs crashed against him, and their owner tumbled headlong.

Waiting for no more, the Cathayan leaped up and fled among the darkened wagons, fleetly for all his height, and presently found himself in among the fires where warriors sat eating. Here he fell into a walk, and, making sure that he was not followed, circled the tents, to approach the feasting pavilion by the main entrance.

Once inside, he ran his eye over the ranks of the revelers, seeking if any were missing. If one were absent, he would know the name of him who had worn the bear's head. They were all present, the khans of the Horde, seated about the dais on which Temujin sat cross-legged on a leopard skin. In the outer-circle, near the wall of the tent, Subotai's red head reared up from the caps of the lesser officers.

Following the direction of his new friend's gaze, Mingan beheld first a wide carpet running from the massive teak pole of the pavilion to the foot of Temujin's throne-seat; second, prostrated on the carpet with his white turban pressing against it, the big man who had been with Bear's Face, half an hour ago. Mingan, as he went to his accustomed place in the gathering by Chepe Noyon, felt quietly in his girdle to make sure that his dagger was secure—then remembered that it had fallen from his hand in the scuffle behind the tent.

"What man is this one?" he questioned the Tiger in a whisper.

"A Turk, captured by Podu, 'tis said, in a caravan from India way. A mighty wrestler, he boasts himself. Just before your coming he walked in and challenged any of the Horde, asking that if he conquered he be given life and freedom."

"Did he come in alone?"

"As I said. No one is eager to step on the carpet, for the Turk is big enough to break a foe in twain."

Now Mingan was aware of the stir of excitement in the revellers, and knew why his entrance passed almost unnoticed. Podu was fingering his thin mustaches in chagrin.

"O my Khan," the Gipsy observed, "this wrestler of the Turks is a mighty

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

wrestler. He has thrown the best of my champions, breaking of one the back, of another the leg, until my followers will not go up against him. The Jelairs of Jamuka have seen him at work and they likewise sit still in their places. The Tatars are licking their sore joints from the contests of the day. Yet we can not let the challenge of the stranger pass."

As if guessing the meaning of the chieftain, the swarthy Turk lifted his head and smiled contemptuously. The khans began to mutter, because it was without precedent that a champion came to the games of the Horde and held the carpet unchallenged. The muttering rose to a demand that Temujin call out a contender.

"O my cousin," spoke up Jamuka coldly, "have you sat so long on the carpet of the council that you fear to set your feet on the wrestling rug? It was not so with Yesukai, your father. Show us, as aforetime, your strength and skill."

Mingan could not speak to Temujin without being overheard, but, catching his chief's eye, he shook his head slightly in warning. Whatever the Turk and the man in the mask had planned, it meant no good to the Mongol.

In the past Temujin had found that Mingan did everything for a good reason, and he glanced to where Subotai sat, looking on eagerly. A match between the Turk and the Buffalo would be worth watching.

"So the Khan is afraid?" the soft voice of Jamuka broke in on his thoughts. "Was Yesukai the last of the Mongol heroes?"

Hereupon men set down their cups, gently, so as to hear the better what would follow; the cupbearers ceased moving about, and there was heard the rustling of the long silk banners suspended over the head of Temujin. Podu twisted the turquoise rings on his thumbs, biting his mustache uneasily.

Old Mukuli chuckled with heavy amusement.

"Aye, Temujin, in the days aforetime the Mongols would start up at the trumpet heralding the day's march, but now you and your men love well the lute that summons to a feast. If you sit too long under the banners some one will roll you up, with one for a shroud—by Natagai, so it will happen."

Memory of his discomfiture at the hand of Temujin's new swordbearer that day rankled.

Very promptly, at this, Temujin stepped down from his high seat and threw off feast robe and mantle. Naked to the waist he advanced toward the Turk who had stripped him of turban, vest and shirt. A murmur came from the lips of the assemblage at sight of the Turk's solid chest over which rippled muscles, of the round arms and the white teeth agleam under a black mustache. For all his weight, he was quick on his feet as he circled his adversary warily.

Temujin was short in the leg, but long of body; his back was straight, his arms knitted to high shoulders by massive sinews—muscles better adapted to swinging a weapon than to quick and cunning hand grips. Mingan noticed that his chin came no higher than the Turk's shoulder, and that his skin was scarred by old wounds, and the flesh of his neck by the wooden *kang* he had worn when a prisoner.

The Khan followed the motions of the experienced Turk with expressionless eyes, but slipped aside as the big wrestler sprang forward to butt him in the chest, and strive to trip him. No whit disconcerted, the black man reached out, caught one of Temujin's wrists and sent the Mongol flying over his shoulder by wheeling his body and pulling down on the wrist he held.

Before Temujin could roll clear, the wrestler fell on him heavily, driving both knees into the Mongol's stomach. He sought for a grip on the chief's head, but Temujin broke his hold and kicked loose, springing to his feet. Mingan saw that blood was dripping from the mouth of his friend.

"A goblet full of gold pieces," cried Podu, beside himself with excitement, "that the Turk pins the Khan to the carpet!"

No one took his wager, and it dawned on the Gipsy that here was no friendly bout, but a struggle out of which one man might come crippled for life. If it should be Temujin!

"Let us stop the match," he exclaimed, to Mukuli.

The Tatar wiped his mustache mechanically, but before he could answer an outcry filled the pavilion.

The Turk had thrown Temujin again, with one of his panther-like tricks of hand and body. Leaping down at the chief

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

a second time, his knees met only the carpet. Temujin had rolled out from under in time. But what brought the spectators to their feet was the sight of a dagger that fell from the girdle of the big wrestler, shaken loose by the heavy impact.

"*Hoi*—the man had steel upon him! Slay him!"

Chepe Noyon's hand went to his empty scabbard. Then, remembering that all their weapons had been left at the threshold of the pavilion, he was starting toward the entrance, when Mingan pulled him down.

"Wait, and watch!" whispered the Cathayan.

The gleaming steel had caught Temujin's eyes, and he had kicked the dagger away from the wrestler to the carpet's edge, where Subotai, surging through the onlookers at Chepe Noyon's shout, set his foot upon it and glared around, as if daring any one to try to pick it up.

Gaining his feet, the Khan rushed his adversary, and now his head was down, his deep eyes glowing with the fire of conflict. The two locked grips, chin pressing shoulders, fingers digging into flesh, and this time it was the Turk who strove to break free. He tried trickery, leaning his weight on the Mongol, then, all at once he began to squeal with rage; he was being hurt.

"By the beard of my sire," grunted Mukuli, licking his lips, and—finding them dry—handing up his goblet, to a staring cupbearer who was quite oblivious of the act. "By Natagi, by —— one will break the other's back. Ha! For all the gold in Cathay I would not set hand between the Khan and his foeman now."

For Temujin's narrowed eyes gleamed red under the beads of perspiration.

"Make an end!" a voice cried somewhere in the crowd.

Exerting all the remaining power of his big limbs, the Turk broke free. Wise in the way of his profession, he knew that Temujin was seeking his life, and he cast himself at the Mongol, forgetful of everything but the need of pinning the other's arms to his body.

Stooping, Temujin caught the man around the knees and raised himself erect, shifting his grip swiftly, so that the Turk balanced on one shoulder. A shrill sound came from the mouth of the wrestler as he felt himself helpless. Then Temujin caught his legs and whirled him through the air with all the strength of mighty sinews and straining back.

The head of the Turk thudded against the teak pole of the pavilion, and he dropped to the carpet, silent now, his skull shattered.

"A good match!" roared Mukuli. "Now——"

Temujin, staggering and gasping for breath, made his way toward Subotai, thrust the giant aside and picked up the dagger.

"A viper was sent to sting me: now the viper is crushed but his sting remains. Who sent it—who?"

"Cousin," said Jamuka's quiet voice, "I know not, save that the dagger is Mingan's—your *orkhon's*."

Mingan started as Temujin, his face a mask of anger strode toward him.

"Though he has changed his skin," cried the Jelair, "I know him for the Cathayan who came to you through the wall. I bade you slay him once, but there is still time, before he deprives the Horde of its master."

"He is a snake!" added Podu vindictively, thinking of his lost ponies, and thankful that Temujin's anger had been centered on one whose death would not promote a new feud in the Gobi.

Standing up, Mingan started to speak, but—aware of the blind rage in the heart of his friend—folded his arms and kept silence. No words would serve to turn aside the torrent that was ready to engulf him.

His calmness, however, did not stay Temujin, who caught his beard in one hand and raised the knife with the other.

A tensing of iron muscles, and the dagger flashed downward, but its course was checked abruptly by a more powerful arm. A hand gripped Temujin's wrist, and a voice spoke in his ear: "Your nature is likewise weak. Because," went on the Buffalo, "you, O Khan, like myself, can not take part in the games without lusting for blood."

A simpleton, thought the watchers—nay, a madman—to curb Temujin when he was angry. But the man of the reindeer people kept his grip on his master, until, perforce, Temujin relaxed his arm.

"The knife is yours!" he snarled at Mingan.

And Mingan saw that it was the one he had lost when he fell outside the tent. The Turk must have picked it up—or it had been given to the wrestler to use on Temujin.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Aye," he admitted. "I dropped it within the hour, but the wrestler was no man of mine."

"For all of that," put in Subotai who seemed to have no sense of ceremony in the presence of his superiors, "there is a fine pile of weapons outside, and the fat brown man could have taken his pick. Wait until the sun rises on the morrow, O Khan, and then slice up your palladin if you want to—it is all one to me. But now your eyes are red, and if you slay him, you will grieve—like me."

Sheer surprize had kept Temujin passive. Now, thoughtfully, he put the knife in his belt, stirred the dead body of the Turk with his foot to see if the man were beyond telling the secret that had been his, and signed to Chepe Noyon to bring his mantle and robe.

"Master," whispered the young Tiger, as he put the garments over Temujin, "Mingan is not a traitor—a man's eyes can not lie, though his tongue be crooked as a ram's horn. The Cathayan was right. There is one in this assemblage who is wiser than you, and all but contrived that you should slay your friend. Wait until the morrow."

"Aye, be it so." Temujin nodded. "Subotai, guard Mingan, the *orkhon*—keep him ever under your eyes. Podu, the feast is at an end. Let no man leave the pavilion until the Mongols pass out."

His glance swept the lines of the watchers, probing and warning. Then, followed by the three palladins, he strode out, leaving the khans staring at the broken body of the giant wrestler.

In this fashion did the friendship of the three heroes begin, for that night they were together in the same tent, and that night was a memorable one in the annals of the Gobi.

VI

THE TIGER GOES A-WOOING

"QUICK," said Mingan, when Chepe Noyon came in from mounting the guard, and the tent-flap fell behind him, leaving the three alone, "go to Temujin, tell him to rouse his captains and arm his men. Danger stands near us and there is little time."

"Little time, indeed, Mingan for you to abide among the living—if I disturb the khan now and bring you into his thoughts again. He is like a bear with a thorn in his paw. Let him sleep." He threw himself down on his sleeping furs. "Is danger something new, that you mew about it like a cat with a cup of sour milk?"

Mingan sighed, and related his experience among the Gipsy wagon *yurts*. He repeated the words of the man in the mask, that Temujin, if he left the pavilion in safety, was to be attacked in his tent.

"A bear skin?" Chepe Noyon frowned. "That is the mask worn by the leader of the Kerait warriors—Wang Khan's commander." He yawned. "You are always dreaming about something or other, Mingan. Now you should be thinking of your plight. It is said Temujin never forgets a friend, but, by Kotwan, he never fails to remember an enemy. As for the Keraits, they are all in Tangut."

Mingan stepped to the tent entrance to look out, but felt the hand of the Buffalo on his shoulder.

" 'Bide where I can see you, Cathayan. The story-tellers relate that all your folk are magicians, and I do not wish you to vanish."

Without turning, Mingan said softly.

"Burta lies bound and gagged in the tent of Podu's women, beside the wagon of the Gipsy chief. Does that mean nothing to you, O Tiger?"

"Now—the —— take me—how can you see that from where you stand?"

"My eyes can see at night—if the moon is bright enough. But do you go quietly, Chepe Noyon and seek word with her, prevail on Podu's sentries to let you pass. But first visit the picket lines and have the three best ponies saddled and brought here."

Hereat the Tiger grumbled, but yawned no more. Presently his eye fell upon Mingan's lute and he brightened. Unobserved by his two companions he picked up the instrument and put it under his cloak, and went out, with a word of assent. He noticed that the light was still burning in Temujin's tent and pondered whether he should tell the Khan of Mingan's fears. Remembering the lute he was carrying, he decided to go to the horse lines instead.

He took his time about ordering the three ponies from the horse tenders and carefully tested saddle-girths and stirrups of the gray pony, the Arab and his mare. When he was satisfied that the camp had quieted down to sleep, he swung into the saddle of the mare and took the reins of the two others,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

leading them after him at a foot pace. Their hoofs made no sound in the sand, and Chepe Noyon passed unchallenged into the dark lanes of the Gipsy wagons. From time to time men looked out at him, but the sight of a rider leading his ponies about at all hours in the camp was common enough, when the day's gaming had ended and wagers won and lost made new masters of horses.

Sighting the lofty summit of the feasting pavilion, the Tiger counted the tents behind it. Nearing the third one in the line, he tethered the ponies to a cart wheel, unshipped his lute and advanced, keeping to the shadow, a little surprized that he had not been stopped. But the guards of Podu seemed to be slumbering with the rest of the camp and Chepe Noyon squatted down under the side of the woman's *yurt*.

He cleared his throat and touched the lute's strings with a gentle finger. As nothing happened to disturb him he began to sing, under his breath, his favorite chant, the "Lament of the Doleful Hero."

"My way leads forth by the gate on the north;
My heart is full of wo.
I hav'n't a cent, begged, stolen or lent,
And friends forget me so.
So let it be! 'Tis heaven's decree.
What can I say—a poor fellow like me?"

Cocking his head, the Tiger listened for stealthy footsteps, for the scrape of an arrow shaft against the wood of the bow, for the *slick* of steel-sword drawn from scabbard. Almost beside his head the silk wall of the tent quivered and was still. Emboldened, he sang on, more softly:

"The pigeon is petted, the wild goose is netted,
The squirrel amasses a store.
When I enter your camp, they call me a scamp,
And thrust me from the door.
So let it be! 'Tis heaven's decree.
What can I say? A poor fel——"

The Tiger stilled his song and listened with all his ears. Near at hand he was aware of a tiny sound, monotonous as the drip-drip of water from a leaking bucket. He peered around him and noticed that from the wagon shaft of the *yurt* opposite something was dropping regularly into the sand.

This wagon should be Podu's and Chepe Noyon was not minded to risk an arrow sent in his direction, if any one were astir. Squinting into the shadow that covered the front of the *yurt* he fancied that a man was crouching over the wagon-tongue. After a quarter of an hour he was sure of it. But the man did not move.

Instead, the silk near his ear shook again, violently as if to convey to his understanding an urgent message. He heard the drowsy voice of an old woman mutter within the tent.

"Be still, Burta. After dawn you will be released, so Podu said. Are we to have no sleep, because of your fidgets?"

Still the figure opposite him did not stir, and the Tiger was puzzled, also his patience was exhausted. He could hear the ponies beginning to toss their heads and paw at the sand. So he rose, his hand on his sword-hilt. As he did so he flung a handful of sand into the face of the watcher.

Now that he was erect, he could make out a wide, dark stain in the ground where the moonlight touched the tip of the wagon-shaft. With a glance around, he strode across to the silent *yurt*, and stooped to feel of the figure, finding it to be the body of a man, warm to his touch. But in the throat of the man was a hunting-knife, and from this trickled a sluggish current that moistened the wooden shaft and dripped into the sand.

No longer wondering that the rear of the tent was unguarded, Chepe Noyon was about to withdraw as swiftly as might be when he glanced into Podu's tent. The moonlight on the thin, silk wall of the back cast a faint glow over the floor of the wagon, and here, too, was a form prone on the sleeping skins. The Tiger entered and felt of it.

By the heavy earrings and the jeweled belt he knew it to be Podu, but a dead Podu, slain by an arrow that had pierced his brain.

Now Chepe Noyon cursed under his breath, and fell silent, harkening to a new sound some distance away, like the buzzing of bees. He had heard its like before, and knew that the buzzing was made up of the trampling of hoofs, the creaking of saddle leather, the low voices of men.

Whereupon, abandoning Mingan's lute, the Tiger leaped to the ground, circled the *yurt* and gained the spot where he had left his horses, hardly checking his stride as he jerked the reins free and mounted the mare.

Drawing the others with him he sped like a drifting shadow past the dark pavilion, out into the central lane of the camp at the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

end of the race course, and shouted aloud in anger and surprize.

Torches flickered and smoked down the race course; groups of horsemen cantered up, to disappear among the tents of the Mongols. Here and there steel flashed, as Temujin's men ran out of their shelters to stand against the riders. The twanging of bowstrings and the groans of the injured mingled with the screams of wounded ponies and the splintering of tent poles.

The Mongols had been surprized. Chepe Noyon cursed his folly in going to the camp of Podu, who was dead and could in no wise come to the defense of his erstwhile guests.

He saw the captain of the Mongol guard struck down by a raider in front of the yak-tail standard; a young brother of Temujin, a boy armed with a toy bow, stepped out of his tent and discharged a shaft pluckily. As a horseman sighted him and flourished a javelin the youngster cast down his shield and bow, knowing the uselessness of flight. As the Tiger watched, the raider passed a spear-point into the youth's chest and cantered on.

Temujin's tent was surrounded by attackers, so that a ring of torches was formed, and in the bright glow Chepe Noyon made out that the riders were riddling the tent with arrows, piercing it in a hundred places so that nothing above ground might survive. The light still burned in the tent.

All this the Tiger perceived in the minute it took him to gallop up to his tent before which stood Subotai, wielding his ax, and Mingan a sword, back to back. A half-dozen men circled around them, warily, for two of the raiders lay outstretched in the sand.

Through this ring of horsemen Chepe Noyon dashed, striking a man from his saddle as he passed by, the two ponies rearing and kicking under his hand what with the lights and clamor that filled the night.

"Mount!" cried the Tiger to his friends.

The rush of the three ponies afforded the hard-pressed warriors a half-moment's respite, which Chepe Noyon used to advantage. Wheeling the quick-footed mare, he faced one of the assailants and feinted at the strange warrior's head. With a turn of the wrist he altered the direction of the blow, slicing the leather buckler from his foeman's arm.

"Jackal!" he snarled, his teeth flashing in his dark face. "Who is your master?"

It struck him suddenly that the raiders were fighting in silence, uttering no war cry, and apparently leaderless. The man in front of him responded by striking at the Tiger's throat—a blow that slid off the agile simitar of the swordsman harmlessly, while Chepe Noyon's return stroke severed the warrior's right wrist and set him swaying in the saddle. By now Subotai and Mingan reined up on either side of him, and the four remaining horseman hung back.

In the pause that followed Chepe Noyon was aware of two things, first that the riders had finished their shooting to pieces of Temujin's tent, and, flinging their torches at it, had galloped off, not wishing, it seemed, to be seen in the vicinity. Second, the leader of the horsemen, with another at his elbow, had sighted the two *orkhons* and Subotai together near by and had trotted over to their assailants, and it was clearly to be seen that he wore the mask of a bear's head.

"Arrows!" The enemy chief ordered.

And arrows he had, though not from the hands of his own men. Chepe Noyon trotted up with Mingan and the Buffalo guarding his back with drawn weapons, and uttered a question under his breath.

"Dog!" The Tiger said. "You are no Kerait. Take off the mask!"

His left hand shot forward, clutching at the bear skin. The chief swung over in the saddle, whereupon Chepe Noyon raised his simitar to smite, and urged the mare forward at the same instant. The other's pony, taken unaware and hampered by the weight of its rider hanging on the off-side, stumbled in the soft sand and threw the chief.

"Die then," snarled the Tiger, "as Temujin died——"

A javelin, cast by the chief's attendant, clashed against his shield, but what stayed his hand was the sight of the sand stirring at the edge of Temujin's crumpled and blazing tent. The sand heaved and fell aside as if an enormous mole were rising to the surface, but instead of a mole a blackened face was revealed by the glow of the fire. Presently the body of a man followed the face, and Temujin climbed out of the hole he had dug in the loose sand while the arrows slashed through his *yurt*.

He reached behind him and drew out a bow and a fistful of arrows. Kneeling almost in the flames, and half-screened by

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the whirling smoke, he began to loose shafts at the five enemies who still remained in saddle.

"Ride him down!" cried the man in the bear skin, warding off Chepe Noyon's belated stroke.

His men started to obey, but one passed too near Subotai and had his skull shattered by a blow of the long ax. Another was knocked out of his saddle by one of Temujin's shafts, and the others cast their torches down and shouted for aid.

Meanwhile Mingan had availed himself of the moment's respite to free Subotai's piebald pony that was straining at its reins before the Buffalo's tent. He rushed up to the Khan, who climbed into the saddle of the tall horse, as reinforcements came up to their assailants.

Chepe Noyon was forced back from his prey and the three warriors formed around Temujin.

"Hai ahatou, koke Mong-ku—hai!"

The Khan of the Mongols roared his battle-cry, his voice carrying above the tumult. Here and there a wounded Mongol fought his way toward him, a *gur*-khan rode up on a sweating horse, followed by a single warrior.

For every one of his men that came, three enemies appeared, and Temujin, rising in his stirrups, saw that the butchery of the Mongols was nearly completed. His eyes glowed with a mad fire, but he saw the folly of making a stand.

"Follow me to Podu's tent!" he ordered, wheeling his horse.

"Podu is slain," Chepe Noyon cried, reining his pony beside his chief, "by one of these jackals of the night."

But Temujin did not alter his course. With his handful of followers he reached the wagons of the Gipsies, the foemen close behind, hindered in their pursuit by lack of torches. Before the woman's tent a pair of Podu's tribesmen were struggling with a group of the riders.

The rush of the Mongols scattered these, Subotai's ax and Chepe Noyon's sword working havoc. Temujin tossed his reins to Mingan, dismounted and, thrusting past the exhausted guards, entered the tent. In a moment he appeared, carrying Burta, bound and gagged in his arms. As he did so the pursuers rounded the pavilion and loosed a flight of arrows.

The *gur*-khan and one of the Gipsies fell, pierced by the missiles, and Mingan, as he assisted Temujin with his burden into the saddle of the piebald rose in his stirrups with a cry. Something seared his breast, and a warm flood rose in his throat. The vista of the tents and the moonlit sky whirled and tossed before his eyes.

He was aware of Sabotai's arm that drew him out of his saddle, to the back of another horse. Then the air rushed past his ears, he coughed and pain wracked him, so that everything disappeared in a red mist.

He felt vaguely the motion of a galloping horse, and in the mist beheld Chepe Noyon dismount, run beside a riderless horse and mount again without stopping. He wondered what it was all about—saw, presently, Burta sitting astride the Arab, her long hair streaming over her back, and on every hand the wide sweep of the desert, shining in the radiance of a crimson moon. And then—nothing.

THE red glory of dawn over his head, the chill of dawn on his outer skin, and burning heat in his chest and throat—of these things Mingan became conscious, but chiefly of an all-enveloping thirst. Although he made no movement, his head was being raised by degrees until he looked into the strained, gaunt face of Temujin.

The Khan had Mingan's head on his knee, and was holding to the lips of the wounded man his leather hunting-cap filled with water. Mingan drank and straightway coughed, the sweat starting on his forehead. But his thirst was assuaged. The dark eyes of his friend searched his face keenly.

"Burta, my-wife-to-be," said Temujin, "the soul of this *orkhon* is near to the spirit world. He has need of your hand and the care of the Gipsies. Abide with him in this place, and leave him not, until I come."

Mingan tried to turn his head to see Burta, yet could not. He wondered whither the multitude of the camp had vanished, and why, presently, Temujin and Chepe Noyon alone were working over a long figure stretched on a saddle cloth beside him. This was Subotai, he fancied, and his two companions were pulling into place a bone dislocated in the giant's arm. Subotai watched them at their labor, chewing his lip. His glance wandered to Mingan and he grinned widely, brushing the dust from his eyes.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Eh, the hard blows were not long in coming. Yet we left a trail of dead foemen along the length of the camp——"

He shut his lips as the bone snapped into place, and Temujin rose.

"I must ride to the Three Rivers, where my people await me," said the khan. "My enemies wax stronger, and few stand near me." His dark face lighted with a secret exultation. "Yet have I found three heroes, and now I know the name of my foe—aye, of him who smote my camp."

Burta questioned, and stamped her foot angrily when he shook his head, saying nothing more. Finally Mingan heard her weeping, when the men had left.

"It was the men of Prester John who slew Temujin's Mongols, and now there will be war in the Gobi," she said.

FEVER-BRED dreams tormented him. He was standing again on the great wall of Cathay, looking at the western plain over which hung the red ball of the sun. Against the wall the riders of the Horde were surging. Little by little they were forcing the gate that barred their way into Cathay, and Mingan sought to throw stones down on them, but his hands would not move. They were smiling at him, waving bared swords in the dust-cloud under the wall and—passing through the gate. Mingan was wearing an imperial robe, with the dragon curled on his breast, heavy with yellow gold.

It was the robe worn by members of his dynasty when death's hour was at hand. Scarcely had he perceived this than the sun dropped out of sight and darkness came on the world.

Again Mingan looked out at a camp-fire over which a caldron boiled merrily, and near which crouched an old woman, shredding roots and herbs in her hands. The shadow of the woman was thrown against a great rock, and Mingan fancied that she was a witch, brewing eternal torment for him over the red fire.

He cried out and perceived Burta standing by him. The girl's hand, cool as a leaf of the forest was on his forehead, as against his lips she pressed a bowl of something warm and astringent. Mingan coughed, and swallowed a little, and presently came the welcome darkness again.

VII

JAMUKA IS AMUSED

A BARBED arrow through the lung is one of the worst possible wounds, and only Burta, and the Gipsies who came to serve her in a rock-lined gully of the desert, knew how hard had been the struggle to bring Mingan back to life. When the fever left him, Mingan lay on his side for days before strength came to him and he could talk.

Meanwhile he saw that he was hidden near a well, below the level of the surrounding plain, around which, like inanimate figures, stood pinnacles of red and gray sandstone. That it was mid-Winter he knew by the cold of the nights, and the stars that circled over his head.

"You are like a man of bones," observed Burta critically, "and not a hero at all, except that you have a fine beard."

There were hollows in her cheeks and shadows under her fine eyes. As she talked she stroked the head of a gerfalcon, chained to its perch near the well. Beside her, on her sleeping furs, was stretched a brown dog with a sharp muzzle and inquisitive eyes.

"When my people dare not come to the well," she explained, "Chepe Noyon and Mukuli hunt with me, and we do not lack for hares or wild geese. This is Chepe Noyon—" she nodded at the hawk—"I call him that because he is so quick and bad tempered. Mukuli is the dog—he growls just like the old Khan and likes to lie near the fire."

Mingan smiled.

"Why do you stay here, daughter of Podu? I am whole and well."

"You are not. Half a moon will pass before you walk about, and another moon before you ride a horse. But I am glad you can talk. Mukuli is wise, but he agrees to everything I say."

"Being wise," nodded Mingan.

"Hum. Temujin never does what I say and he is wiser than any one——"

"Except the man in the bear's head."

Burta frowned a little and stood up to look out of their shelter.

"Then you have seen him, too, Mingan? My people gather news for me as squirrels gather acorns, and they say the chief with the bear skin has been seen in the desert near here. They say the omens have been

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

many; vultures have been seen in the sky at dawn, and a raven has made a nest in a dead pine. The tribesmen have wintered close to their *ordus*, their chief's camps; rumors are many that blood will run freely in the Gobi and the bones of men whiten on the battlefield."

She sighed and bit her lip.

"I hate Temujin," she added fiercely. "He has been away for so long, and no message has come from him."

"Yet you abide here, as he ordered, to await his coming."

"*Kai!*" She poked at the sables resentfully. "You were too ill to be moved."

Mingan noticed, however, that Burta continued to make her home at the well, although dark-skinned men, adorned more often than not with the spoil of the desert caravans, rode up from time to time to urge her to seek a place of greater safety.

One day she returned from a hunt with the falcon and her eyes were shining. She had met, it seemed, the old woman who had helped her nurse Mingan and had news in plenty. The Mongols had not been idle during the Winter. They had been joined by several regiments of the reindeer people, brought by Subotai, and Temujin had won over the famous spearmen, the Merkets, to his standard. Then, during a blizzard, he had marched against the Tatars and surrounded Mukuli in his *ordu*.

There had been a brief fight, when Temujin went to the old khan and asked him to give in to his power.

Mukuli had growled, and then fell to laughing aloud.

"'My word is not smoke, O Khan,' he said, 'and aforetime I swore that I would join you when you proved yourself good metal. Verily, no man has taken Mukuli unaware before now,' he swore, 'and I will be your man in all things.'"

Burta pondered smilingly.

"I think Mukuli yearned toward Temujin at the feast in my father's camp when he overthrew the Turk."

She patted the muzzle of the brown dog, who was the self-appointed watchman of their covert.

So, at the end of that Winter the northern half of the Horde—the Mongols, Tatars, Tungusi and Merkets—was divided from the southern half, the Keraits, and the Jelairs of Jamuka. The Master of Plotting, although Temujin's cousin had proclaimed that he was sworn to fellowship with Prester John, and must side with the Christians.

Temujin sent messengers to Prester John to say that no quarrel was between them, nor should they take up the sword against each other—who had been allies in the past. But the messengers were slain on the way, and the Mongol outposts brought back word of the Kerait's preparations for war. So Temujin held a council, to muster his full power.

"He gave Mukuli back the gold tablet of an *orkhon*, and entreated him kindly," Burta added, "and then——"

"Temujin did well——"

"Nay, there is no Temujin, no Man of Iron now. *Ai*, he who raced horses and snared hawks with me when I was a child—is no more."

Mingan started.

"What mean you?"

"His khans at the council gave him a new name, because now he has truly earned the leadership of the Horde. They named him the Great Khan, Genghis Khan."

Wrapped in his thoughts, Mingan did not hear the slight sound of a footstep near by; nor did he notice the sudden uprising of the brown dog, who sniffed the air and whined. Temujin had grown at his side from boy to man and from man to master. Probably this was what had earned him the hatred of Prester John, of the Christians.

In Cathay there was a proverb that there could not be two suns in the sky, nor two emperors in the land. Prester John had sought to slay Temujin, or, as Mingan must think of him now, Genghis Khan; failing that the Christians had declared war on him——

Mingan sighed. He should have rejoiced at the good fortune that cut the Horde in twain, and started a great feud in the Gobi, because the Horde was the enemy of his dynasty—of Cathay itself. Had not Mingan come into the desert with Genghis Khan to study the weakness of this enemy, and profit by it? But it was hard for the Cathayan prince to think of Genghis Khan as aught but Temujin, who had befriended him. He found himself wishing for the Tiger and the Buffalo. He wanted to talk things over with them.

The brown dog barked once, angrily, and looked over his shoulders at his mistress.

"Be quiet, Mukuli—I will not play with you." Burta frowned at the sable furs on

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

which she sat, chin on hand, her brown eyes brooding. "Now that Temujin has become Genghis Khan, he takes no thought of the daughter of Podu. For five moons I have awaited his coming as he bade me at this place, and—I hate Genghis Khan."

She struck at the rich furs contemptuously.

"*Kai,*" I will await him no longer, and I will take my people to the Christians, so that he will learn the Gipsies are not to be despised——"

She sprang to her feet, hands on her breast, eyes wide with swift alarm. Thus encouraged, the brown dog raced forward, barking.

A man, walking quietly, had entered the gully and stood between two rocks, smiling at her words. It was Jamuka. Mingan noticed that he wore new, silvered, chain-mail and a velvet kaftan, and that a few yards away a dozen of his Jelair tribesmen had come into view, fully armed with javelins and bows.

"So, little vixen," observed Jamuka, much amused, "this is where you have run to earth! My men espied you against the sky-line an hour ago, when we were following the trail of some of your Gipsies that circled around this well. May Allah cast me down but I was hoping for a sight of you before we don helmets and mount for battle——

He broke off, eying Mingan thoughtfully.

"Ah, my Cathayan—meseems you have shrunk somewhat, like a dried-up water-skin. It is the fortune of a spy, sometimes, not to eat from gold dishes, nor to ride the horses of a king."

He swept the well and the gully with an appraising glance and spat at the dog who stood, short legs planted wide, menacingly before his mistress. Jamuka's thin, handsome face and down-curving nose revealed more strongly than ever the Turkish blood in him.

"So, Burta, you hate Temujin, or, I should say Genghis?"

Color flooded into the girl's face, and she did not respond.

"And you will lead your Gipsies to Prester John? Good. He will have gold for your men and pastures for your horses, within Tangut. You have never seen Tangut, little Burta; it is green and pleasant while the desert is brown and bare. The castle is a pearl set in splendors—gardens and lakes, wherein every kind of beast and bird is to be found. He has a hundred snow-white peregrine falcons, and as many hunting leopards——"

He glanced half-scornfully at the small brown gerfalcon on the perch by the girl.

"Does the chief hero of Prester John wear a bear's head upon his own?" she asked thoughtfully.

"Why, so he does," Jamuka smiled. "When he goes forth from his castle, so that all his men will know him from afar and his enemies will not see his face."

"Then is he my foe!" Burta tossed her head and her white teeth gleamed between parted lips. "It was a man in a bear's mask that slew Podu, my father and the guard at his tent. Another Gipsy, too, was surprized and struck down, but lived to tell me the truth afterward."

Jamuka frowned, and tapped the jewel-studded hilt of his sword.

"And, if so? You can not bring life to Podu again, and you must think of yourself. Prester John is wiser than other men; his acts are stones that pave the way to success. You may not stand alone—a woman served by a handful of wanderers."

"And so, Jamuka, must I choose between Prester John and Genghis Khan—aye, choosing the first, you will honor me with your protection, and love. Is not that what you would say?"

For the second time in as many minutes the quick-thinking chief was surprized.

"By Allah, you have the right of it! It was for that I sought you out, even though an army waits without a leader in my absence. Prester John has named me his ally——"

"You, the cousin of Genghis Khan!"

Not often was Jamuka put upon the defensive in this manner, and it ruffled him.

"Aye, but your Great Khan and I can not sleep on the same side of the fire. He is a warrior, true, but a luster after blood. I—though this you may not know—am master of the caravan trade from India to Cathay, and must needs keep open the caravan routes, so that the silks, spices, tea and cotton—aye, the goods of the world—can pass——"

"Under your hand, that doubtless keeps much within its grasp. Oh, I have heard many things from my—wanderers—Jamuka. Tales of your wealth and the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

women of many lands that you have bought. You will never win me to your hand, for your master is Podu's murderer."

She stamped furiously, and brushed the hair back from her forehead. Jamuka considered her with glowing eyes, and seemed not ill-pleased at her anger.

"Genghis Khan is a scourge—a man-slayer. Burta, your Gipsies have enriched their tents and increased their herds by taking toll of my caravans. That is ordained, perhaps, and I have no quarrel with you; but Genghis would turn every camel and pony, aye, and cameleer of the caravans into a beast of war, or a warrior. By trade Cathay rose to greatness, aye and the empire of the Turks, my fathers, in the mountains that are called the Roof of the World; and by trade I would make the empire of the Horde equal to Cathay, while Genghis would make of it a field of white bones."

She held her brown head high, although her chin came only to the shoulder of the tall Turk.

"White bones, you say, Jamuka—ah, tell me what else has Wang Khan made of my father? Is trade a god that demands human life for sacrifice? Nay, you can not paint a wrong to make it shine like a righteous act, nor ask me to tread softly and speak not of vengeance when I am wronged. Go, Master of Plotting, I abide here until the coming of Genghis Khan who will listen to my plea."

JAMUKA'S dark eyes glistened with admiration.

"*B'illah*, little daughter of fury, you will do no such thing. Why do you think I sought you out, at some pains, while your Khan tarried?"

He knew when to make an end of words in dealing with a woman. Calling to his men to bring up their horses, he strode toward Burta, who glanced around swiftly, seeking some means of escape. The Jelairs ringed her in. Mingan started up from his seat, but was stayed by two spearmen, while Jamuka took the reins of a pony, and caught Burta's arm.

When he did so the brown dog sprang at the chief. Jamuka kicked it aside, and one of his men launched a javelin at it, knocking Burta's four-legged guardian whimpering to the sand. Meanwhile the chieftain, not without a deal of trouble, had lifted the girl into the saddle and tied her ankles to the stirrups.

"You have less honor than that dog," said Mingan angrily.

"But more wit," smiled Jamuka. "By the ninety and nine holy names, what is that?"

The hawk, aroused by the scuffle, was screaming and beating its wing, its claws gripping the perch and its hooded head bristling.

"Slay me that squawker," ordered the chief, "or it may break loose and be seen in the air by some of Burta's bands. So!"

An arrow struck the falcon from its stand, whereupon Jamuka was pleased to order his men to dig a grave at one side of the gully, near the rocks, with their swords and axes. The sand yielded to their efforts easily, but they kept on, at a nod from their leader, until they had worked down into the clay bottom, and completed a hole a yard wide and as deep and a little longer.

"You have more wit than the dog, Mingan," observed the chief, frowning. "Too much, I think. I can not decide whether you are faithful to Genghis Khan, or merely a spy sent by the Cathayans. That being the case I shall leave the issue to destiny, and put you in your grave alive instead of slaying you."

Whereupon the two spearmen seized Mingan and led him to the hole. The Cathayan stifled the compelling impulse to struggle, to throw off the hands that held him. In his weakened condition resistance would have been useless, and he had been trained to submit to ordeals without showing fear. He forced himself to walk to the edge of the hole without compulsion and to look down into it.

Jamuka seemed disappointed in his tranquillity, but Burta cried out indignantly that he was a prince of the dynasty of Cathay, and should be treated as a prisoner of rank.

No attention was paid her and the warriors tied Mingan's feet together with stout leather thongs; then his knees were bound in similar fashion; lastly his wrists were secured together behind his back. The two men, at a sign from Jamuka, lifted him and sat him down in the hole, placing his legs, stiffened with the bonds, out in front of him. His back was now against one end of the excavation, the soles of his feet against the other and his wide shoulders pressed upon the sides.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

So placed, his chin was on a level with the ground, and he saw that it was not the purpose of the tribesmen to bury him. Instead they began to cast back the clay, sand and stones, first over his legs, then about his waist. Jamuka reined his horse close, to lean down from the saddle and watch his prisoner's face.

"O Cathayan, if it is true that you are a prince," he whispered so that Burta could not hear, "it is not fitting that you suffer the fate of a slave, nay, by the prophet's beard! Tell me then the plans of Genghis Khan, and what he knows of Prester John, and you shall be sent back to the wall with the first caravan that departs from Tangut, after we have overthrown the Mongol scourge."

Mingan shook his head gravely.

"*Yah Allah.* As you have chosen your bed you shall lie in it."

Jamuka left him, and the men finished filling in the hole, so that the earth came to Mingan's chin. After stamping it down firmly with a covert kick or two at the helpless face, they went to seek out their horses, well contented with the day's work.

One last thing remained to be done, to complete the ceremony of the burial alive, and Jamuka did it, wheeling his horse in front of Mingan and then driving in his heels so that the pony started directly at the filled-in grave and the man's head, and passed over with a thudding of uneasy hoofs in the soft earth. No horse will tread on a man if he can help it—but this knowledge did not save the Cathayan the agony of sitting tense and powerless while beast and rider passed over him.

Left alone, Mingan's first feeling was one of relief, as he listened to the dwindling sounds of creaking saddles and jangling bits. Forthwith he began to strain upward with his knees, only to discover that his legs, stretched out flat, had no power to push into the three feet of earth. If he could bend them—but he could not.

Then he tried working his body back and forth, and this succeeded a little better; he could press the dirt forward an inch or two. His bound arms he could not move at all, nor was he able to loosen the thongs at his wrists.

In five minutes Mingan, who was a philosophic thinker, was convinced of what the Jelairs who planted him in the earth would have assured him gratis—that he was absolutely helpless. The hard-packed clay at his back and at the soles of his feet wedged him in. The sun, now at its zenith, poured down into the gully on his bare head, and sweat stung his eyes. His legs began to cramp him, then his arms.

An ant crawled up behind his ears and refused to drop off when he shook his head savagely.

The heat from the upper crust of sand and the rocks behind him pierced the skin of his skull, and his throat became dry, even while his eyes sought the cool stones that surrounded the well. From the level of the earth itself Mingan became aware of many things that lived and moved on its surface. A lizard ran out from between two stones, and turned back hastily when he moved his head; from the skins near by a scorpion crawled toward him slowly. Mingan felt grateful when it altered its course and turned toward the ruffled body of the dead hawk to investigate.

Before an hour passed he had lost control of himself, shouting and struggling to throw off the weight that pressed down his legs, raging aloud at the ants that came more thickly now.

IT WAS the dog that restored his spirits a little. The cut over its head and shoulder had knocked it senseless for a moment, but an animal seldom loses consciousness for long. Mukuli had half-crawled, half-limped after his mistress when the horsemen rode away, but now returned from its fruitless effort, and sighted Mingan. It made no difference to the dog that only the man's head was perceptible. He whined and licked the perspiration from Mingan's cheek, and aroused the man's frantic hopes by digging weakly with his forepaws in the soft earth under his nose.

But when Mukuli had hollowed out enough space to curl himself up in, he slumped down and fell to licking his gashed shoulder, whimpering. When Mingan spoke, Mukuli thumped his tail a little, as evidence of appreciation. Digging had passed out of his canine brain for the time being.

When the sun was half-way down to the horizon Mukuli went to the well and drank thirstily, growling at a jackal that drifted in among the rocks and snatched up the dead hawk savagely, making off with its prey.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Presently the jackal came back and sat down on its haunches. Mukuli retreated to the neighborhood of the man, and lay down, too weak to stand on his legs for long. At once the jackal started up, but veered off when Mingan shouted hoarsely. Puzzled, but still hungry, the lean little beast circled the man's head and the snarling dog, darting away, only to draw back a step at a time, until it took up a position for observation and reflection at the spring.

Mukuli looked at Mingan anxiously as if wondering why the man did not get up out of the earth and drive the jackal away. Presently the dog whined and drew closer.

The sun passed behind the rocks, stripping the gully of all color and heat in a moment. But overhead the sky was a brilliant blue, cloudless and clear as space itself. Mingan took a little comfort from the fact that the jackal was no nearer. He had ceased to think of the sky, of Jamuka or anything except the animal ten paces away.

And then his teeth clicked together spasmodically and the blood roared in his ears. Mukuli lifted his muzzle inquiringly, and the jackal retreated, shadow-like among the rocks, never to be seen again.

Near the well a man was singing and the sound of it was drawing nearer.

"The courtier snores behind locked doors,
Where I keep watch and ward.
The falcon is fed, the slave put to bed,
But I am the palace guard.
So let it be—'tis heaven's decree,
What can I say, a poor fellow like me?"

Two camels loomed over the edge of the gully, and, having made one of the pair kneel, the singer climbed down to the well. He was alone, for the other beast bore only a light pack. Against the shimmering sky of twilight Mingan made out a slender warrior wearing a bronze Mongol helmet, the nose-piece and the leather drop all but hiding his face.

It was the Tiger; but, beholding the scattered sleeping furs, the dark stains and many footprints in the sand and the empty perch of the falcon, his mirth vanished. He picked up and examined some articles left behind by the Gipsy girl, and groaned.

"Burta—Mingan!"

"Here, Chepe Noyon!"

The Tiger wheeled and peered into the shadows under the rocks, uncertainly, for Mingan's voice was little more than a hoarse croak. All that was visible was the dog Mukuli standing in front of what seemed to be a round stone. Chepe Noyon took a swift step—backward.

"Abide where you are, devil! Come no nearer but relate to me if indeed you have a human voice what has become of the girl Burta and the hero Mingan."

Mukuli, uncertain whether this were friend or foe, wagged his tail tentatively and sat down, whining. Mingan rasped impatiently—

"I am here, buried alive by Jamuka who carried Burta off."

Chepe Noyon's jaw dropped, and, fumbling in the throat opening of his armor, drew out a small ebony cross, holding it high in front of him.

"*In hoc signo vinces!*"* Now, devil, take flight; or if dog you be, show me where my comrade Mingan lies."

Perceiving the friendlier note in the man's voice, the dog barked and crawled to one side, scratching at the earth by the prisoner's chin. Chepe Noyon advanced slowly, and peered anxiously into the haggard and distorted features.

"If you are verily Mingan's head—aye, so you are—tell me where lies the rest of you."

"In the sand under your foot—dig me out."

NOT until food and drink and the warmth of a fire restored Mingan to something resembling a living being did Chepe Noyon feel fully satisfied that the man at his side was in truth his friend.

"There is evil afoot," he grumbled, relating what had passed in the Three Rivers country.

The failure of the envoys he had sent to Prester John to return had decided Genghis Khan that war with the Keraits was unavoidable, and the master of the Horde, once his mind was made up, had moved at once toward Tangut, following the northern edge of the sandy desert where his horses would find grazing. Genghis Khan had sent Chepe Noyon to the well to find Burta and bring the Gipsy girl to him.

"He trusts me," said the Tiger moodily, "although I am a Kerait, but it is not fitting that I should command a *tuman* in the coming battle between Prester John and Genghis Khan. I do not understand why my people have taken up the sword. How did the

* By this sign conquer.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

messengers from the Three Rivers perish? Why did Jamuka take his stand beside Prester John?"

Mingan pondered a while.

"I can see a little both of treachery and trickery. But if Genghis Khan is on the march there is little time to learn the truth. Since you came nearly due south to the well, the Mongols must be as near to Tangut as we. If you are faithful to Temujin, you should ride to Tangut at once——"

"Aye, on Jamuka's trail. I was sent to find Burta and bring her off safely, and that I will do."

"Nay, you would fail. One way is open to us, to seek out the daughter of Podu, and at the same time to see behind the mask of our enemy, who goes about in the skin of a bear——"

"It was not Prester John who raided our tents, and who was overthrown by my horse."

"Who wears the mask of a bear," went on Mingan calmly. "And that way leads us to Prester John himself."

Burta had saved Mingan's life, and he knew now that the wayward girl loved Genghis Khan. To venture in the camp of Jamuka's army after her would be to search for one grain of sand in the desert. Their only recourse was to seek an audience with Prester John of the Christians, in the castle of Tangut, and to put their case before him, since he alone had power to over-rule Jamuka.

He explained this to Chepe Noyon who was only half-convinced.

"Yet, in the time of my father, Mingan, and his father, no one of our village has seen the face of Prester John. He has lived for twelve times a hundred years; he is a magician."

Mingan was quite ready to believe this.

"So will he aid us the more."

He was in no condition to set out that evening, so he slept through the night, which was more than the Tiger did. In the morning they made up their packs, gave the camels a drink and were about to climb into the cloths that served for saddles when the brown dog came lurching after Mingan, whining anxiously, sensing that they were going to abandon him. Mingan had not the heart to leave Mukuli behind, and placed him on the rump of his camel, after bandaging his hurts.

He thought little of it at the time, save that Chepe Noyon grumbled, but thereafter he had reason to be thankful for Mukuli's presence.

For a week they traveled due west.

A sandstorm, sweeping down on the Gobi out of a black sky, and heralded by a devastating wind, obliterated the tracks left by Jamuka and his men before the two palladins had journeyed westward for three days. Chepe Noyon, as the storm cleared away, crawled out from beside his camel and pointed to a series of whirling columns which rose from the earth to the clouds hanging low overhead.

"Yonder are the first of the guardians of Tangut, and it is well for us that *they* passed us by."

Mingan watched the moving pillars of sand circle and vanish into the murk of the tempest, and nodded understandingly; he had become accustomed to the changing moods of the desert, and knew that the sand pillars were caused by the suction of the wind. If Chepe Noyon who was reckless enough, dreaded the approach to the man called Prester John, there must be greater danger than this to be faced.

In fact, coming to one of the last camps of Gipsies on the caravan track they were following, the Tiger halted long enough to trade his camels for two shaggy ponies, a lute and a suit of beggar's weeds. His own armor and cloak, with his sword, he gave to the head-man of the camp with instructions to take them to Genghis Khan and receive goodly guerdon for so doing.

He learned from the Gipsies that Jamuka's cavalcade had passed the day before, and was careful to make sure of the nomad's fidelity by describing the capture of Burta. With the weapon and armor as tokens, the man was to inform the Mongol khan that Mingan and Chepe Noyon would press on to Tangut, and search for the girl. He told the Gipsy where to find the Horde—about a week's ride to the north and west. This done he arrayed himself in the long smock and high-crowned hat of woven reeds and slung the lute over his shoulder.

"We will shave off your beard," he observed, scanning Mingan. "The rest of you looks rarely like a hungry scavenger of the caravan tracks. Lo, I am a minstrel, a singer of songs—you a teller of tales. Whine when you speak and call all men, 'Good Sir' and bow when you are kicked.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Then no one will know that you are one of the Mongol Horde."

They kept, however, the gold tablets showing their rank in the Horde, concealed in their wallets. Other weapons, in their new guise of wandering entertainers, Chepe Noyon said they were better without.

From the Gipsy camp they hurried on through rising ground, to a barren waste of rocky plain where Jamuka's trail was lost again, but where Mingan made a discovery. It was after daybreak when the air was clear that he sighted in the plain before them the towers and walls of a city, sursounded by groves of trees rising to a majestic height.

"It must be Tangut," he cried.

The Tiger smiled.

"Ride on, and enter the gate, if you can."

Sure of what he saw, Mingan hastened forward, yet came no nearer to the city. By afternoon, when he thought to reach the nearest trees, it fell apart while he watched, and vanished, leaving the desert bare and shelterless. With an exclamation, he turned to Chepe Noyon who was much amused at his discomfiture.

"'Tis part of the magic of Prester John," the Tiger explained. "Those who seek out Tangut see on every hand these cities in the air, and, pursuing them, are completely lost*."

He spoke with satisfaction, for he had witnessed the miracle of the skies more than once, but in Mingan there was a quick stirring of the blood. He had thought he knew the desert, yet now he looked upon the manifestation of forces beyond his knowledge or control. Misgivings crowded upon him, but he set his teeth and took up the reins of his horse again.

As if the vision of the city had been a warning, they suffered much from cold and hunger in a land where the mists crowded in on them, and snow lay in the pockets of the rocks. By the thin air Mingan knew that they must be at the summit of a lofty elevation; Chepe Noyon admitted that he had lost his way, and they fared badly until the dog Mukuli scented out a passing caravan in the mists, and the two warriors joined company with some Arab traders who were hastening on to Tangut, to work south from there out of the Gobi before war should overtake them and their burden of silk, spice and tea.

From the cold heights they descended into a broad valley where the sun warmed them. Here Chepe Noyon got his bearings, and led the way past bands of warriors riding north, and herds of horses, cattle and sheep driven south. At night they made their quarters in the village *serais* where by virtue of the lute and the many tales of Mingan, coupled with the tricks he had taught Mukuli, they received food and a sleeping place of sorts.

They were now in the Jelair country, and learned that the army of the Turkish tribesmen and the Keraits was assembling within a day's march, toward the setting sun. Jamuka had joined his host, but Chepe Noyon discovered that the men who had been with the khan of the Jelairs had ridden on to the city of Tangut, taking with them a strange woman. Evidently Jamuka had feared to take Burta into the tumult of a mobilization camp.

Nothing had been seen or heard of the Horde, which was believed to be still in the Three Rivers country. But Chepe Noyon suspected that it was nearer than that.

Three days more of riding and they reached a fairer land, where the camps of the nomads ceased and villages appeared, where fields of grain, newly-sown, lined the highways, and white-kerchiefed women greeted them pleasantly inquiring news of the armies. To the south and west a line of forested mountains arose,* and this time Mingan found that they remained in view. Chepe Noyon smiled as they drew in among the foot-hills, skirting groves of fruit-trees in blossom.

"You are within ten arrow flights of Tangut, the chief city of Prester John. Can you tell me where it lies?"

Mingan searched the mountain peaks that rose overhead and shook his head.

"Verily," he admitted, "there is magic in this place, for I see naught save some hamlets of shepherds and many roads that twine and twist about."

By way of answer, Chepe Noyon turned aside, to follow a brisk stream that led them to a bridge. Crossing this, the Tiger swerved again into a great white road, wide as any in Cathay. Mingan saw that the road ran into a long, narrow valley almost

*The mirages of the western Gobi proved as much of a mystery to other explorers, among them Marco Polo, as to Mingan.

*The range now called the Thian Shan—a spur of the Himalayas.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

concealed by two shoulders of the hills—a valley whose middle was a canal from which the stream ran and whose sides were row upon row of clay houses.

Mirrored in the canal, or lake was the upper end of the gorge, and here were no dwellings, but a steep slope of the mountain, heavily wooded. At the summit of this height were the black walls of a castle. It was quite unlike the pavilions and pagodas of Cathay, for the high walls shut in a space over which showed the tops of the trees, barely visible at that distance, and in the center reared up a single tower.

At the head of the lake was an open plaza from which steps of black granite began, disappearing in the forested slope, through which zig-zagged a roadway up to the castle, judging from the gaps in the trees.

"There is the abode of Prester John," said Chepe Noyon.

"Where we must go," nodded Mingan.

But evening was at hand, and Chepe Noyon said that now a guard of Jelair bowmen was drawn across the plaza at the head of the lake where the granite stairway began. Orders had been issued that not even the bringers of food were to be admitted to the stair after dark.

"Besides," added the Tiger thoughtfully, "if we go not up by the stair, we must climb the forested height to the wall, where the guardians are not men but beasts of the wilds, and if we must e'en face the four-footed sentinels, it were best we did not do so at night."

Mingan finished his scrutiny of the castle approaches, and pointed to a pigeon that circled over the valley on the northern side and descended to the houses.

"Aye, now is the hour of rest."

They led their tired ponies back to one of the *serais* at the entrance of the valley, placed there for the Moslem merchants and the caravans that passed through Tangut. That night, however, they were the only occupants of the place who claimed meat and fruit for themselves, and grass for their ponies, from the attendants who ministered to the wants of travelers. Although they dined well, and the shelter offered them was clean and comfortable, they were able to sleep little.

Above them the streets of the city buzzed with talk and movement; horses clattered in and out the roadways, and the Tiger, venturing out to inquire the meaning of the commotion, came back with gleaming eyes.

"The merchants who left the city made no mistake. Ho, the rats are running from the tents when the smoke of fire comes down the wind. A carrier-pigeon has come in from the camp of the Keraits and Jelairs in the north. The Mongols have reached Jamuka already and have struck their blow. So the word of the pigeon said."

Mingan smiled.

"My father, Yesukai, who came to this place said that the birds of Tangut talked, but has a pigeon a tongue? Not three days have gone by since we passed the camp of Jamuka, and none have overtaken us on the road."

"These are carrier-pigeons—taken from their home to a distance. A message is written and tied to their claw and, released, they fly between sunrise and sunset the space that a horse covers in thrice that time." Chepe Noyon sighed, and shook his head. "The Horde, to the number of a hundred times a thousand fell upon Jamuka's array before the main forces of the Keraits came up from the cities yonder in the mountains. All the wiles of the Master of Plotting could not serve to overcome the advantage of the sudden attack. That is always the way of Genghis Khan."

Later messages admitted that Jamuka was retreating rapidly on Tangut.

Knowing the tactics of Genghis Khan, Mingan felt that the Mongols would press the pursuit, to overtake the leaders of the enemy and to break up resistance in the city before it could come to a head. The battle had been fought and won by dawn of that day, and before the second sunrise the victors or the vanquished would be within the foot-hills of the mountains.

What was Prester John doing? No one outside the castle knew.

"One other thing have I learned," said the Tiger. "This morning a woman captive was led through Tangut under escort of some officers of Jamuka's guard, and passed through the sentries into the castle. Those who saw her relate that she is dark of skin and beautiful as twilight itself or the stars at evening, but that she railed at her guards, and maneuvered her horse so that one, a fat Turk, fell into the lake from the plaza."

Mingan smiled, the description fitting

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Burta pretty well. But for once the gay Chepe Noyon had no mind for mirth. On his knees near the wall of the *serai* he prayed, the palms of his hands pressed together, the ebony cross placed on a stone before his eyes—prayed to his God, Jehovah, to deliver the girl Burta safe from harm, and his people, the Christians, from the sword of the Mongols.

Aware of the Tiger's loyalty to Genghis Khan, Mingan wondered how Chepe Noyon could hope to see all of his wishes fulfilled. But then, Mingan reflected, they were in the domain of a magician.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE FANTOM ARMY

by Hugh Pendexter

ONE OF THE most extraordinary examples of the phenomenon known as the "mirage" was witnessed by Edward Bryant, who crossed overland to California in 1847. His party had left Utah Lake and was well out on the great salt desert on August third when a furious sand-storm assailed them from the south. While the storm was dying out he was walking several rods ahead of the party, having turned his mule in with the other stock.

Very often during the trip across the plains he had been entertained and fascinated by beautiful illusions in the sky.

Now occurred something so entirely different that Mr. Bryant was thoroughly deceived. As he walked along he was amazed to behold on his right a score of men approaching, some mounted, some on foot. Measuring from the horizon they were from three to five miles away, but instead of being dots on the drear waste they looked as large as if only a few rods distant. Mr. Bryant could explain this amazing fact away only by assuming them to be giants. His next thought was that they must be a band of Utah Indians, but he knew no hunters or warriors would be cutting his trail. He called out to his companions to join him as men of gigantic stature were coming. His followers ran forward. Then he saw the score of newcomers increased to three or four hundred, and they were quickening their pace.

Although reason was staggered, yet Mr. Bryant sought an explanation. Perhaps it might be Captain Frémont and his band returning from California, although this theory did not explain away the huge proportions of the newcomers.

To make sure the spectacle was not the work of his imagination he asked one of his followers if he saw them. The man replied he had glimpsed the strange band several times but as it disappeared and reappeared miraculously he assumed it to be a mirage. Mr. Bryant in part says, "It was then, for the first time, so perfect was the deception, that I conjectured that probably these figures were the reflections of our own images by the atmosphere, filled as it was with fine particles of crystallized matter, or by the distant horizon, covered by the same substance."

Following out this line of reasoning he studied the figure in advance of the main band and discovered it resembled himself. It was uncanny to see himself clearly apparent at a distance of several miles. He half turned and stretched his arms at full length and instantly the strange figure did the same. He ran forward several paces, and the figure instantly did likewise. He tested his double by other maneuvers and found it was like posing before a mirror. Every movement of his and of his followers was instantly duplicated by the newcomers. For nearly an hour the spectral band continued to approach them, but never drew any nearer, and gradually melted away. In conclusion Mr. Bryant says, "The figures were our own shadows, produced and reproduced by the mirror-like composition impregnating the atmosphere and covering the plain."

And what must have been the effect on the aborigines of the plains and deserts if they encountered the same phenomenon? Doubtless it would be the basis for many legends of giants and monsters springing from the ground to bar the passage of hunters or warriors.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

QUAYS

by A. Judson Hanna

GAWD, but I'm tired o' Trinity bells; I'm sick for the feel o' the seas,
For the throbbin' iron under my feet, an' the smell o' them furrin quays.
I've known an' loved 'em all over the world; 'ated an' cursed 'em too,
But none can compare with the Sydney quays east o' the Cockatoo.

There's quays that are 'andsome as churches, swept an' bright as a Bristol bar;
Or stinky with smells o' rotty shells; or sweet with the taste o' tar.
There's quays over there in Havre town with sticky, clarety smells,
An' some in the Straits, where we went for freights, 'otter than nigger 'ells.

An' some they was built by the convict gangs, an' others weren't built at all—
Just 'appened there like a pile o' junk kicked up by a China squall.
There's quays I 'ave walked in the port o' Brest, abidin', an' long as the Strand,
Quays put down by these drivin' Yanks—when the world crimps, there they'll stand.

I likes 'em best in the evenin' time, stickin' out in them shut lagoons,
With them prickly smells, an' the coco bark, an' them 'ula-'ula tunes;
With the fiddles a-playin' ragtime flings, an' the tom-toms shakin' the air,
An' a big brown baby a-steppin' fast with a pansy in 'er hair.

There's a mate I seen in that Bowery pub who'll put in a word for me.
I bruk 'is 'ead when 'e slanged my gel, an' 'e was a plain A. B.
Oh yes, 'e remembers me for that, an' 'e'll take it out o' my 'ide.
But wot cares I for 'is 'ate an' spite, an' 'is new, gold-button pride?

'E'll 'aze me from Ambrose Channel Light clean over to Jackson Bay,
Drive an' sweat me an' torture me, an' try to 'old out my pay.
But 'ell! Wot's a 'azin' more or less! Gawd, but 'e sha'n't kill me!
An' she will be waitin' there when I steps ashore on a Darling quay.

I'll be 'earin' the last o' Trinity bells—an' wot cares I for 'is spleen,
With the purr o' the iron under my feet, an' a kiss on Albert Green?

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SIR PIEGAN PASSES

A Complete Novelette

by

W. C. TUTTLE

Author of "Peace Medicine," "The Misdeal," etc.

SOLOMON KANE'S heart would, if properly broken up, have made a number of perfectly good arrowheads. His conscience, if properly cut to certain lengths, would have made any number of perfectly good corkscrews. Outside of that, Solomon Kane was normal.

Kane had money—plenty of it; but when it came to earning money by the sweat of his brow, Solomon Kane never even got moderately moist. No, he was too shrewd to earn anything—except possibly a few curses, which were exploded behind his broad back.

Kane had come to Micaville several years before this story begins—came with a working capital of ten dollars and an assaying outfit. Micaville was young. A big strike had been made. Prospectors were thicker than the proverbial flea; and great was the need of an assayer. Solomon Kane came at an opportune time—for Solomon Kane.

It was no trouble for Solomon Kane to determine how much gold a certain sample of rock contained. Not a bit of trouble. He gazed within the crucible, computed the approximate weight of what was contained therein—and subtracted enough to show barely a trace in his assay certificate

Thus discouraged, the prospector lost no time in moving on to other ground. Casual conversation had shown Solomon Kane the exact location of the aforementioned sample. What could be more simple—except the prospector? Solomon Kane was thereby able to pick his prospects, which had been abandoned by the original locator, and waxed fat from his shrewdness.

He owned an unpretentious assay office on the main street of Micaville; still plying his trade. He had sold most of his properties, at a fair profit, you may be sure; but there still remained one piece of property, which Solomon in all his wisdom had not been able to acquire.

It has been said that every man has his price; but Solomon never looked at a price-tag. Whether old Cale Winters wanted a hundred or a half-million, it made no difference to Solomon.

Old Cale Winters had no assays made. In the first place, he did not trust Solomon; in the second place, he knew that the ledge in his short tunnel would not run over three dollars per ton in free milling gold. Old Cale Winters knew this; he also knew, from a chance remark, that Solomon Kane wanted the property.

Bush Cleveland, Solomon's right-hand man, had unconsciously dropped a remark, which caused old Cale Winters to go back to his cabin and talk seriously to his family; which consisted of his wife and daughter. They were just about ready to vacate their two claims and move to some other spot.

Solomon Kane looked with great favor upon Jennie Winters, who, with her blue eyes and black hair, and a figure seldom found in mountain girls, was not at all hard to look upon.

Jennie looked upon Solomon Kane and saw a middle-aged, gross, pig-jowled human being, with colorless eyes, no eyebrows, fingers like cucumbers and feet which turned out at an awkward angle when he

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

walked. Solomon Kane was not good to look upon.

Jennie's indifference toward him seemed to only cause Solomon to double his desire to acquire old Cale's property—for nothing. Micaville, which was still in a half-civilized state, gave no heed to such esthetic things as love.

Whether Jennie Winters married Solomon Kane or not would make no difference to the mineral output of the district, the price of beans, the opening of a new honk-atonk or the secret plans to organize a vigilance committee. Micaville was neutral on anything except sudden wealth or sudden death.

The two claims, which caused Solomon Kane to break the Tenth Commandment, were located about two miles from town. Old Cale Winters and his family lived in a two-room log-cabin on a bit of level bench-land, just above a deep cañon. About two hundred yards from this cabin was the mouth of Winters' tunnel. The claims were registered under the name of The Jennie and Joe Mining and Milling Company.

Jennie and Joe were twins at birth; but Joe failed to "make the grade," as they say in Micaville. His only claim to posterity was a name in the family Bible and on a worn location notice.

Jennie and her mother had no faith in the Jennie and Joe, and did not conceal the fact that it was better than an even bet that they would starve to death before Cale Winters ever found anything except indications of mighty hard work.

Cale Winters had felt the same about it, until he knew that Solomon Kane wanted the property. If it was desired of Solomon Kane it must be better than a three-dollar-a-ton proposition.

Bush Cleveland was an emaciated, keen-eyed, slouchy individual, who always rolled a fresh cigaret while his present smoke was still burning. In this way he saved considerable on the price of matches. One light would suffice him for the day.

Bush Cleveland, for all of his physical and mental deficiencies, had a nose for gold. He was a human divining-rod. Solomon Kane kept Bush supplied with liquor, tobacco and three square meals a day. This increased Solomon's overhead expenses greatly. Bush's salary amounted to an extra dollar or two per month—Solomon using the dollar to get Bush completely inebriated, after which he would get Bush to sign an affidavit that he had received his thirty dollars that month. These mónthly debauches were blanks to Bush Cleveland, and he never did know what became of his salary—nor cared. Solomon Kane was a good man to work for.

Bush knew where the real vein could be found on the Jennie and Joe. He had showed it to Solomon, and together they had tested, estimated and traced it until Solomon Kane dreamed nightly of the wealth, which old Cale Winters was keeping from him.

It grew to be an obsession with Solomon. Bush Cleveland smoked his innumerable cigarets, signed for the salary he never received, and Micaville went on in its own dumb way; while old Cale Winters and his family grew very poor and very discouraged.

Old Cale was crabbed and mistrustful of the rest of the world. He wore a holstered Colt on his hip and swore to perforate any one who meddled with his property. This did not react in his favor in the eyes of Micaville. It meant that some day old Cale would mistake some innocent man for a trespasser and fill him so full of lead that he would have to be shipped to a smelter before being attended by the undertaker. No man likes to be shot by mistake.

Solomon Kane knew old Cale's mental attitude, and respected it. Solomon was not the kind to seek oblivion at the point of a pistol. No, Solomon was wary of powder smoke.

HE MET Mrs. Winters at the general store and was very polite to her. He even carried the groceries out to her rickety old cart and untied the old wabble-legged cayuse for her. For this kindness he received the information that she and Jennie were sick unto misery over their property, and would leave Micaville at a minute's notice—if old Cale would go with them.

Old Cale was the fly in the axle-grease. Solomon took this under advisement. He told Bush Cleveland about it. Bush inhaled three more cigarets and propounded a plan, which savored of downright meanness. In fact it was something which drove the color from Solomon Kane's face—and that took some shock. He put one of his

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ham-like hands over Bush's mouth, looking fearfully around at his crucibles and furnace. Walls have ears; so why not furnaces and crucibles.

Bush's cigaret burned a neat little blister on Solomon's palm, and necessitated the squandering of a match on the next smoke, which was already under construction.

"My ——!" gasped Solomon. "You speak of such a thing?"

Bush did not deny it, and Solomon's question was superfluous. He knew what Bush had suggested. Solomon got very busy without knowing just what he was doing, and Bush laid out plans for his next cigaret.

After an interval of perhaps five minutes, Solomon turned to Bush.

"You—uh—I am surprized, Bush. Never have I stooped to such things."

Bush had nothing to say. There was no argument in favor of his suggestion; so why worry about it. Solomon continued to clean up his work-room; but his mind was not on his work, which was attested by the fact that he unconsciously drew the cork from a nitric acid bottle and sniffed at the contents. It is not pleasant.

After a sufficient length of time Solomon sat down close to Bush, and yawned. It was a stage yawn. Bush lighted a fresh cigaret.

"Who," said Solomon softly, "who would do this?"

"Eh?" Bush looked quizzically at him for a moment. "Oh, yeah."

Bush grew very thoughtful. He had almost forgotten what he had mentioned to Solomon. He forgot things easily; which was why Solomon valued him so highly.

"Oh, some gun-fighter, Sol."

"Sure—some gun-fighter!" spat Solomon disgustedly. "Just any gun-fighter, I suppose."

"For about a thousand dollars," nodded Bush.

Solomon took this under advisement. A thousand is a lot of dollars. Bush broke into his unhappy reveries.

"Mebbe you'll have to pungle up five thousand—I dunno."

"I betcha you dunno!" gasped Solomon, "You think too much in big money, Bush."

"Ex-cuse me," grunted Bush, and began manufacturing another paper smoke.

"That Jennie and Joe is a gamble," observed Solomon softly. "Mebbe I'll lose money on such a deal."

"Mebbe," admitted Bush dreamily.

Solomon squirmed in his seat. He was cautious. Bush was not responsible for anything, when drunk. If Bush talked he might talk secrets.

"You know any gun-fighters, Bush?" softly.

"Not pers'nally." Bush shook his head slowly. "I know one by reputation. He's a bad *hombre*, Sol. That man would shoot his own grandfather for five thousand dollars."

"Five thousand dollars! Why emphasize one gunman? I am not a good shooter; but I'd——"

Solomon wiped his brow with the palm of his hand.

"And he'd keep his mouth shut," stated Bush.

"I should think he would," agreed Solomon sourly.

"Cinch," agreed Bush, who did not take Solomon's tone of voice into consideration. "It could be worked like this——"

Solomon listened closely to Bush's scheme. Solomon had a flinty heart and a crooked soul; but he did not like the scheme. It was very, very bad. Five thousand was a lot of money. That was the objectional part of the scheme. The rest was fine. Maybe this gunman would meet him half-way.

Bush agreed that he might; but reminded Solomon that a professional gunman is nobody to argue with.

"We get him here first and then we talk prices," stated Solomon wisely, "You help me make him understand that we don't want to buy him outright—just use him for a little while. Rent is cheaper than a cash buy."

Bush nodded over an unfinished cigaret.

THE Piegan Kid wasn't going anywhere in particular. He expected ultimately to connect up with some cow-outfit. He had a fairly good horse, a beautiful saddle and a very good gun. The Piegan Kid was neither of heroic proportions nor Adonis-like of feature.

His face was peaked under the shade of his wide sombrero, and a pair of inquiring gray eyes looked out upon the world unafraid. His flannel shirt, well-worn chaps and boots run over at the heel proclaimed him a son of the dim trails.

Suddenly a streak of gray fur seemed to

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

glide out of a clump of mesquite. An' instant later it whirled and raced on its back track. The Piegan Kid's spurs had already been socked home and his rope untied. The Kid craved excitement, and there is plenty of excitement in a race across the hills in the wake of a frightened coyote.

The horse ran low to the ground, with the Kid standing high in his stirrups, the wide coil of rope whirling in his hand.

Suddenly something went wrong with man and beast. Old Man Badger had builded his domicile right in the line of march, and the running bronco had dropped one fast moving front foot into Mr. Badger's front door.

Came a kalediscopic movement of man and beast, and the man landed in a heap in a patch of mesquite and Spanish dagger. The horse tried to get to its feet; but fell back.

The Piegan Kid got to his feet and untangled himself and rope from the brush. Barring a few scratches and gouges from the Spanish dagger-plant he was as good as new. He limped back to the horse and looked it over.

"Coyotes," muttered the Kid to himself, "Coyotes is hoodoos." He drew his gun, slowly cocked it; while a pair of buzzards circled high overhead. It is hard to deceive a buzzard as to the true state of affairs. The Kid glanced up at them and wondered if they were in cahoots with the coyote. Anyway, there was only one thing to do, under the circumstances. The Kid holstered his smoking gun and looked down upon his fancy saddle. It was no ordinary hull. He had won it from a rodeo-following Mexican. Its silver rosettes, fancy stamping and general air of money-worth appealed to the Kid. He looked all around. He had no way of knowing how far it was to the next town or cattle-ranch; but he was not going to give up that saddle and bridle and fancy Navaho blanket.

He was about twelve miles from Micaville; but he did not know it. Micaville would have meant nothing to the Kid, except that it might be a place where he could secure a new horse.

The Kid was no pedestrian. As far back as he could remember he had always bestrode a horse when going any distance; which made it imperative that he secure a horse as soon as possible. He was like a born sailor, wading around in the ocean.

The big saddle weighed very heavy, and the Navaho blanket seemed to invite the rays of the sun. The bridle reins had a nasty habit of tangling in his feet and throwing him. Taking it all in all, the Piegan Kid was not enjoying the middle of the day.

Suddenly he stopped. Coming up the gentle slope toward him was a man on a pinto horse. A closer view showed that the man was riding bareback. He did not look like the type of a man who would make a practise of riding a skinny pinto bareback. This man wore two holstered guns. He was a rather greasy-looking person, a trifle taller than the Kid; and not at all pleasant of feature.

The Kid waited for him to come up. They looked closely at each other. The Kid dropped his outfit to the sand and took the makings of a cigaret from his pocket. The other man slid off his pinto and also produced the makings. During this particular operation there was no word spoken. The Kid offered a light from his match, which the other accepted.

"Badger hole," explained the Kid.

The other man nodded and puffed slowly on his cigaret. Finally he said:

"Bronc pulled away at a water-hole yesterday. When I found him he'd rolled the saddle off."

The Kid looked longingly at the pinto. It wasn't so much of a pinto either; but it was something to hang the saddle on to, and it had four good legs. The other man looked at the ornate saddle. He was very tired of riding bareback, and the saddle appealed to him in more ways than one.

Their glances met. The stranger waved a hand to encompass the horse and saddle.

"We're kinda in the same fix, pardner. How about gamblin' t' see who rides proper?"

"My saddle against yore bronc?" queried the Kid.

"As is," nodded the stranger. "One hand of draw-poker."

"Yo're on," said the Kid.

He spread his gaudy blanket in the shade of a mesquite, while the stranger dug deep into his chaps-pocket and produced a greasy deck of cards. The Kid glanced at the cards, which were badly soiled and dog-eared from many games, and felt that this stranger was probably very familiar with that certain deck of cards. He had a rippling, free-handed shuffle, which bespoke familiarity with that old deck.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The Kid noticed that this stranger did not offer to cut for deal; but took it for granted that he was to pass out the cards. The Kid said nothing; which was a peculiarity of the Piegan Kid. He knelt on the edge of the blanket and watched the man shuffle the cards.

This stranger squatted on his heels, with both feet on the edge of the blanket. The Kid also noted this. Then came the deal—five cards apiece. The Kid's hand showed two aces, a nine, a trey and a jack. He tossed the last three cards aside. The stranger discarded three.

Without a word the stranger dealt him three cards. As the Kid picked up his cards the stranger dealt himself three. It was an even draw. The Kid's hands were on the blanket, grasping his three cards. The other placed the remainder of the deck on the blanket beside him.

Then the Kid grasped the blanket, together with the three cards, threw himself backwards and stood the stranger on the back of his neck.

The man spun on his shoulder, threw himself to a sitting position—and gazed into the muzzle of the Piegan Kid's heavy Colt pistol.

"The top of the deck is the place to deal from," said the Kid slowly. "Unbuckle yore belt."

There was nothing for the stranger to do but obey. The Kid took the two guns and threw them far away into the brush. Then he cinched his saddle to the stranger's horse and swung into the saddle.

"*Adios*," nodded the Kid.

The stranger said nothing. After the Kid faded out over the crest of a hill, the stranger went on a hunt for his pistols.

A few miles further on the Piegan Kid struck the main road to Micaville, and in due time he arrived at the town. This was about two weeks after Solomon Kane and Bush Cleveland had deliberated deeply.

The Kid swung down at a hitch-rack; but the eagle-eye of Bush Cleveland had spied him before he reached the rack, and the Kid turned to look into the bland face of Solomon's hired man. Bush was rolling a cigaret.

"This is the place," announced Bush.

The Piegan Kid looked from Bush to the street and back to Bush. The Kid mentally classed Bush as being loco, and turned to tie his horse. Bush moved in closer and whispered:

"Follow me, but don't act like yuh was," and turned away across the street.

The Kid watched him cross the street and enter a building, on which was the faded sign—

SOLOMON KANE, ASSAYER AND METALLURGIST

It was all Greek to the Kid. Why did this man want him to follow? The Kid shrugged his shoulders, shifted his gun a trifle and followed Bush. He believed that he was perfectly capable of taking care of himself, and his curiosity had been aroused.

The Kid looked back at his horse and deliberated whether he would lead it across the street to a more convenient hitch-rack. He usually kept his rolling-stock as handy as possible; because the Piegan Kid had, in the past, found it necessary to leave town very suddenly.

He finally decided to take a chance. Bush had left the door partly open, and the Kid peered inside before coming in. It seemed to be an ordinary assay office; so he went in. There was no sign of Bush Cleveland; but Solomon Kane was peering over the top of an ancient roll-top desk, sizing up the Kid.

"What could I do for you?" asked Solomon, a slight quaver in his voice.

The Kid lounged against the short counter and sized up the room. He did not speak. Solomon got to his feet, peered cautiously out of the dusty window and crooked a cucumber-like forefinger at the Kid.

"Come in here to talk."

He opened a door and stood aside for the Kid to go in past him. The Kid was too wise for any such a move. He shook his head and squinted at Solomon. No stranger would follow him into a strange place—not if he knew it. Solomon grinned in appreciation of the Kid's caution and went in first.

Bush was inside, sitting on a broken-backed chair. Solomon waved the Kid to a stool; but the Kid shook his head and leaned back against the door.

"Don't take no chances, eh?" grinned Solomon nervously.

The Kid grinned. Solomon shoved his hands deep into his pants pockets and shifted his feet. Then he said—

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Mebbe we do business, eh?"

The Kid wrinkled his nose. He did not like the smell of acids, which filled the room. Solomon cleared his throat.

"I make you a deal for one thousand dollars. What you say? Cash on the spot."

The Kid's eyes wandered around the room. No, this man must be speaking to him. Solomon watched him closely. One thousand dollars cash did not seem to excite the Kid greatly. Solomon swore to himself that this man must be another Captain Kidd.

"You ain't talkin' to me, are yuh?" asked the Kid seriously. Solomon knew he had shot too low. He must part with more money.

"It ain't worth more," he whined, "but to you I make it two thousand. That is my top. You say yes?"

The Kid shook his head. He had been unable to read the sign on the door. Perhaps he had got into a lunatic asylum. Solomon misconstrued the Kid's negative. Two thousand was clearly not enough. Solomon looked to Bush for a sign—and got it. Bush spread four fingers across his knee. Four thousand!

Solomon's throat contracted sharply. He wondered if he would be able to make the offer without suffering a complete breakdown. The Kid had not moved nor changed expression. As Solomon looked at him the Piegan Kid's right hand eased slowly nearer to the butt of his gun. Solomon caved.

"I—I make it four thousand."

It was a supreme effort. The Kid sniffed again. The acid odors tickled his nose and he sneezed sharply. Solomon nearly fainted. It was like an explosion. Bush tore a tobacco-filled cigaret paper square in two and dropped his package of tobacco to the floor. The Kid rubbed his tingling nose.

"You—you take my offer?" quavered Solomon.

The Kid looked queerly at him and shook his head.

"I am not a millionaire!" wailed Solomon. "How much you want, anyway?"

"Lemme do this," interrupted Bush. "You ain't got no sense in this kinda thing."

He turned to the Kid.

"Pardner, will you take five thousand dollars and keep yore mouth shut?"

The Kid's mouth opened, as if he were about to speak, but no words came. He glanced around the place and back at Bush.

"Yeah. I don't mind," very little above a whisper.

Bush turned triumphantly to Solomon.

"That's the way to do business, Sol."

"My ——!" breathed Sol. "Anybody should do business with five thousand dollars! That ain't business—that's craziness!"

"Aw, give it to him!" Bush grew in his own importance. "Yuh can't be a piker in a deal like this."

He turned to the Kid, and added—

"Can he?"

The Kid shook his head slowly. He was willing to be led now. Solomon went into the other room. Bush rolled a cigaret, while the Piegan Kid pinched himself in a tender spot and wondered deeply.

Sol came slowly back, carrying a large bill-fold. Bush blew a thin stream of smoke toward the ceiling and looked important. Hadn't he engineered the deal all the way through. He turned to the Kid.

"I knowed yuh as soon as yuh hit town. Yore letter said to watch for a black-and-white pinto bronc."

"Oh," said the Kid softly, and watched Solomon Kane strip off five bills. They were for one thousand dollars each; and each one was a tissue from the heart of Solomon Kane. The Kid took them. They felt crisp and new, probably for the reason that few thousand dollar bills are handled enough to wear off the crispness.

Solomon Kane swallowed hard and sat down heavily. He had often collected his pound of flesh, but this was the first time he had ever gambled with such an ante as that. Bush looked at him with a sneer. What was five thousand—to Bush Cleveland?

The Kid shuffled the bills and waited for some one to start talking. Solomon seemed unable to do anything except breathe heavily. Finally he turned to Bush and said—

"You tell 'im, Bush."

Bush lighted a cigaret and grew important again. He looked with pity upon Solomon Kane and turned to the Kid.

"This is like I told yuh in that letter. All yuh got to do is bump off a guy. *Sabe?* Name's Winters. Packs a gun all the time and won't let nobody on his claims. All yuh got to do is go across near his tunnel. He'll come out and try to run a sandy on yuh.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"You don't *sabe* the old coot, and yuh fill him with lead. Everybody knows he's always threatenin' folks with his gun. Yo're a stranger around here, and you shoots in self-defense. Then yuh can vamoose if yuh feel like it, or yuh can stay innocent-like and have the jury clear yuh."

"And don't seem to know us," cut in Solomon wisely.

"Thasall right," said Bush. "You give him a assay certificate, Sol. If anybody seen him come here we can say he brings some samples and waits for a report."

"And you keep that report by you," ordered Solomon. "You should have that for my alibi, y' understand?"

The Kid nodded. He wasn't any too keen-minded; but he knew what they were paying him to do.

Bush took a piece of paper and drew a rough map to show the Kid where Winters' place was located. Then Solomon tore up the paper and threw it inside a furnace.

"Yuh can go to it any time yuh feel that-away," said Bush. "Sooner the better."

The Kid nodded and looked at Solomon, who seemed to have shrunk considerable. That five thousand had reduced him physically, it seemed. The Kid licked his lip and half-smiled down at the bills.

"You want a ree-seet?"

Solomon's mouth opened widely and closed slowly, as he shook his head.

"Nossir! Between us there is only honor. I pay you and I expect you to do my instructions."

The Kid put the bills into his pocket. Solomon watched them disappear, and in his heart grew a great fear that they would never come back dragging the big interest.

"I depend on your honor," stated Solomon slowly. "I hope you play square, and I—I——"

Solomon wiped the moisture from his brow with a moist palm.

"You play square with Solomon Kane and you never lose by it."

"Five thousand ain't much," said Bush importantly. "You shoot square with us we'll make it worth yore while, y'betcha."

Solomon stared at Bush wonderingly.

"You should mind your own business, Bush! Ain't I made it worth his while? You think I am the mint? Eh?"

He turned to the Kid.

"You got paid, ain't you? That's my top price. Now I make out one assay certificate."

With trembling hands Solomon Kane made out a certificate. It showed the date, number of samples, and checked off what the sample was tested for. From force of habit he wrote—Gold; no trace.

The Kid folded it up and put it in his pocket.

"All through?" asked the Kid.

"Yes," nodded Solomon and held out a ham-like hand.

"You shake on the deal, mister?"

The Kid did not see the hand. He shifted his gun just a trifle as he hitched up his belt.

"Glad of it," he remarked. "This place stinks."

"Acid," smiled Bush.

"Not—entirely," replied the Kid.

THE Piegan Kid got a room in a small hotel. He was not in the habit of renting a hotel room; but he wanted a place where he could be alone and think. It was a big effort for him to think, and he needed plenty of time and complete solitude.

He locked the door and sat down on the bed. He took out the five bills and examined them. One thousand dollars each! He tried to visualize what five thousand dollars amounted to; but after it got past a hundred he was groping into space. Now, if it had been about eighty dollars he could have understood. He had eighty dollars once, and he could remember what it bought. Why, one of those pieces of paper would buy at least twenty saddles. That meant that he could buy a hundred saddles. He squinted around the small room, trying to visualize what one hundred fifty-dollar saddles would look like. It was nerve-racking.

From a contemplation of his vast wealth his mind went back to the men who had given it to him. As far as the Kid could see it was a gift. There was no question but that they wanted him to kill a man in return for the money; but the Kid wasn't the right man. He had begun to suspect the man who had dealt from the bottom of the deck.

The pinto had been the mark of identification. The Kid laughed a soundless laugh. It was a good joke. He wondered if he ought to go and kill this man Winters. No,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

that wouldn't be right either. He wasn't the man who was supposed to do the deed. Anyway, the Kid wasn't a murderer.

He rolled up the five bills and put them back in his pocket. Suppose somebody held him up? He took them out and hesitated. He took off a boot and slipped them into the toe. It made an awkward lump against his toes. No, that wasn't a good hiding-place. If somebody hit him on the head, with the intent to rob, they would most surely take off his boots. He removed the bills.

He thought of hiding them under the straw-tick of the bed. That was a bad idea. He looked at the carpet, but it was threadbare. Anyway, there was danger of a fire in a building like that. His hat-band might suffice; but there is always danger of losing one's hat. Finally a smile came over his face. He knew where the safest place on his person was—and it was the last place where a robber would ever think of looking.

After making his cache, the Piegan Kid jingled his heels down the narrow hall, crossed the street to his horse and rode out of town. No one had given him a second glance. He was just the ordinary cowpuncher type, and Micaville was used to cowpunchers.

Solomon Kane and Bush Cleveland had seen him take his horse from the rack, and their faces were glued to the dusty pane of glass, as they watched him leave in the direction of the Jennie and Joe.

"He ain't losin' no time," remarked Bush.

Solomon's chin sagged sadly.

"He should be quick for five thousand—and there is nothing between us but honor."

"You didn't want no receipt," reminded Bush.

Solomon sniffed mournfully.

"Just honor, Bush. Nobody can show a jury your name on a receipt, when you do business strictly on honor. My honor is fine, but—Bush, how did he strike you—like he was honest?"

Bush licked the edge of a cigaret paper carefully and shaped the smoke before he said—

"Sol, that old Winters must be a good shot. Suppose he kills this gun-fighter."

"My ——!" gasped Solomon. "Why think such pleasant things? Ain't you never thought of that before I gave up my five thousand? Why not? Why—" Solomon grew inarticulate.

"We'll hope for the best," soothed Bush.

"Hope!" squealed Solomon. "Men with brains don't have to hope. I listen to you——"

"You talk like this feller was already dead," sneered Bush. "Maybe he won't even see Winters."

Solomon stared at Bush for a moment and then seemed to fairly pounce upon him in a frenzy. It was like a grizzly bear attacking a sheep. It wasn't a fight—just an attack. Solomon lifted Bush by his shoulders and shook him loose from his cigaret. Then he deposited Bush into a chair with such vigor that the underpinning of the chair gave way in a glorious crash.

"Sot!" roared Solomon. "Thinker! Some day you 'maybe' me too much and I kill you! Shut up! Don't talk. Inside me it is all riled up. Five thousand dollars! Maybe I fire you, Bush—maybe."

Bush got painfully to his feet and cast around for his cigaret, which had been ground to powder under one of Solomon's big feet. Bush showed no animosity toward Solomon. It was not the first time Solomon had let his temper get the best of him.

Solomon watched him roll a fresh cigaret, and when it was rolled he lighted a match and held it for Bush.

"You know, Bush," said Solomon softly, "you know I am a friend to you—a good friend, Bush."

"Y'betcha," nodded Bush. "We get along fine, Sol."

OLD Cale Winters had just come to the mouth of his tunnel, smarting from a verbal encounter with his wife. He was forced, secretly, to admit that she was right. He had put in many months at hard labor, and there was nothing to show for it, except a tunnel. There was very little demand for tunnels.

Their supply of money was about exhausted, and their food supply was running very low. It began to look as if they were going to have to move to a more productive place. Anyway, a low-grade quartz-mine was of no value to a poor man.

It meant that he would have to give up his claims, unless he wanted to come back each year and do the assessment work. It was not a pleasant outlook. He was scratching a piece of quartz with a misshapen thumb-nail, when his daughter, Jennie, came up to him.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Jennie had been a listener to the confab, and, while she indorsed her mother's views, she felt sorry for her dad. He was getting old, and he had looked very tired when he left the shack; so she had come to cheer him.

She sat down on one of the handles of an ore-filled wheelbarrow. Old Cale squinted at her. He suddenly realized that Jennie's clothes were not exactly of fine quality nor style. She had never had a chance to be like other girls.

"Jen, I reckon we'll foller ma's advice."

Jennie nodded slowly.

"Maybe it's best, dad. You're working yourself to death, and there don't seem to be anything in sight."

"I ain't worryin' about me."

The old man shook his head.

"I reckon I ain't been square with you and the old woman. Women folks kinda hankers for dew-dads and plenty of their own kind to talk with. I—I reckon we'll vamoose to some place where the old man can pick up some money. "I plumb hate to leggo this prop'ty—especially when I feel that Sol Kane hankers for it. Whatcha reckon he wants of it, Jen?"

"He might work it, dad. Solomon Kane has plenty of money."

Cale Winters shook his head vehemently. "Nossir! He ain't shootin' at no three-dollar ore, he ain't! If I only knowed——"

Jennie lifted her head and glanced down toward their cabin.

"Who is that, dad?" she asked.

A man, riding a pinto horse, had stopped at the cabin door and was talking to Mrs. Winters. He turned and rode slowly toward the tunnel. Cale Winters shifted his pistol so that it lay across his lap. He had mentally given up his claims; but he was still willing to protect them.

The Piegan Kid rode up close to them and got off his horse. There was nothing secretive about his approach. He looked at Jennie and then at the old man, who was squinting narrowly at him.

None of the three spoke. After a moment's hesitation the Kid sat down on the edge of the cut, across from the old man, removed his sombrero and wiped his brow with the back of his hand.

"Kinda hot," he remarked softly.

"Uh-huh," grunted old Cale Winters. "Whatcha want?"

"I heard," said the Kid slowly, "I heard that you was kinda mean about folks crossin' yore claim."

"Yuh did?" grunted the old man. "Well, yuh heard right."

"I s'pect so," agreed the Kid absently. "I came."

Jennie stared at him. It seemed absurd that any man would come just to test her father's threats. Still, this man did not appear to be of the type who would pick a quarrel with an old man. Old Cale Winters got slowly to his feet and pointed across the hills.

"Young feller, you better move on. I said I wouldn't stand for no trespassin' and I meant it. Vamoose *pronto!*"

The Kid shook his head and picked at the rosette on his chap-pocket. He was not a bit disturbed at the old man's belligerent attitude. Finally he looked up.

"Know a feller named Sol?"

Jennie and her father exchanged glances and both looked at the Kid.

"Sol Kane?" asked the old man.

"I dunno. Assayer."

"That's him! What about him?"

The Kid pondered a while, as he glanced around. Then—

"You worth anythin' to him—dead?"

Old Cale's hand dropped to his pistol butt and he took a half-step toward the Kid; but the Kid did not seem to mind his attitude.

"What do you mean?" asked Jennie wonderingly.

"I dunno," admitted the Kid, "I just ask, thasall."

"He wants these claims," growled old Cale. "That's what he wants."

"Val'able?"

Old Cale sighed and looked toward the yawning mouth of his tunnel.

"Valuable? I dunno. I ain't never got very rich. Vein is about three dollars a ton."

"Mebbe," suggested the Kid. "Mebbe there's another vein."

Old Cale nodded. He had long suspected that there was, and that Solomon Kane, in some way, had discovered it. Jennie looked anxiously toward the Kid, who blushed under her direct gaze. He was not used to having a pretty girl look at him.

"What do you know about another vein?" asked old Cale.

"Nothin'. I'm strange around here. If you was dead, I don't reckon yore wife and daughter would stay here very long."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"What you drivin' at?" snapped old Cale.

"Ain't that a fact?"

The Kid's question was directed at Jennie, who smiled.

"I think I know what you mean. No, I don't think we would stay long."

The Kid smiled and got to his feet.

"Much obliged. Well, I reckon I'll be goin'. Kinda hot, ain't it."

"Wait!" snapped old Cale. "I want yuh to explain a few things, feller."

The Kid swung into his saddle and smiled at the old man.

"Pardner, I can't explain nothin'—yet. Don't know much m'self. *Adios.*"

He rode around the foot of the bluff, heading back toward Micaville. The sun had gone down, and the long shadows of the West range had almost reached the little shack. Old Cale shook his head and put his hand on his daughter's shoulder.

"Jen, I don't *sabe* that feller a-tall. He don't talk sense, don't yuh know it?"

"At least he didn't waste a lot of words," smiled Jennie. "I think he will come back again."

"He ain't scared to," smiled the old man. "Danged if I believe he can be bluffed."

BUCK HELM, the two-gun man, was slightly disgusted with the state of affairs. When the Kid had outsmarted him in the poker-game, it had rather amused Buck. The loss of the pinto meant little to him; but it gave him something to look forward to. He would most surely make the Kid dance when they met again.

But walking was very unpleasant. He had no idea where Micaville was, nor the road to Micaville; so he managed just to miss the road all that twelve miles to town, and was in a vile temper when he arrived.

A few scoops of cactus-juice restored his spirits and he cast about for the party or parties who had engaged him for a certain piece of business. He was to come to the assay office. The letter, which Bush had sent him, unsigned, had been destroyed, according to instructions; but there was no question but that he could prove his identity.

It was very easy to find the assay office. Buck sauntered inside and leaned on the narrow counter. Bush and Solomon were in the back room, gloating over the best of a sample from old Cale Winter's property, when they heard the thump of Buck's heels on the thin floor. Solomon covered the crucible and went out to meet another victim of misplaced confidence.

Solomon squinted at Buck Helm and placed both big hands on the counter.

"Something you want?" he asked.

Buck grinned slightly. The cactus-juice had permeated his innermost being, and he felt kindly disposed toward all men. He leaned closer to Solomon.

"Well, pardner, what was the job yuh wanted done?"

Solomon stared at him. He did not know this man. A frown gathered on Solomon's forehead and he caressed his generous nose with a thumb and finger.

"I want no job done, stranger."

"Yuh don't?"

Buck's smile moved away. He looked around the place and back at Solomon.

"More'n one assay office in this here town?"

"Nossir. I have exclusive in Micaville."

"Funny," grunted Buck. "That letter said for me to come to the assay office."

Solomon shifted his big feet. Somehow the soles of his feet had suddenly grown hot. Premonitions always seemed to heat his pedal extremities. He grew nervous.

"A letter? What letter, stranger?"

Bush Cleveland sauntered to the doorway and gazed upon Buck. Solomon glanced at Bush.

"I got a letter," stated Buck slowly. "It said for me to tear it up right away, and——"

"What?" gasped Bush, leaning away from the wall. "You got a lul-letter? You?"

He goggled at Buck and his wide eyes shifted to Solomon, who was clutching the counter with both hands.

"I got a letter," nodded Buck. "It said——"

"Pinto?" gasped Solomon. "A pinto horse?"

"Uh-huh," nodded Buck smiling. "I lost it——"

Solomon croaked like a giant frog and hurled himself away from the counter and into Bush Cleveland. Together they crashed to the floor, half-in and half-out of the connecting doorway.

"Huh-help!" squealed Bush.

Buck swung across the counter, grasped Solomon by the neck and tore him away from his victim. Bush, choking and

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

wheezing, rolled into the back room, while Solomon clawed desperately at Buck's legs, cursing in a language which was strange to Buck.

The Piegan Kid had noticed that there was a view door to Solomon's back room, which opened into a very dirty back-yard. He did not wish to go into the main entrance this time; so he rode in at the rear, got off his horse and came to this rear door just in time to hear Bush's cry for help.

Micaville houses were not exactly sound-proof structures, and by leaning close to the ill-fitting door, the Kid was able to hear what was going on inside.

Bush got to his feet and tried with both hands to iron out his wrinkled vocal cords. Solomon's grip had caused them to sag considerable. Also he had half-swallowed a well-lighted cigaret, which did not tend to increase his comfort.

Buck let Solomon get to his feet; but brushed away the pawing hands.

"Aw, talk sense!" snapped Buck. "What's all this yowlin' about, anyway?"

Solomon motioned for Buck to enter the back room. He was unable to speak. Buck went in, keeping one eye on Solomon and the other on Bush. Solomon closed the door and glared at Bush, who was still suffering.

"You do this!" wailed Solomon, shaking both hands at Bush. "Pig head! You think of everything awful, except this!"

"What's all the fuss about?" queried Buck. Solomon swallowed hard and choked over his flow of words.

"You come now! Five thousand dollars I give to a man of a pinto horse! Where are you? Where is he? —— of my fathers, I am ruined! Five thousand——"

He dived for Bush; but Bush tripped over a box and fell out of the way. Solomon crashed into the wall and fairly bounced away, mouthing curses, brokenly.

Buck grinned. It was as good as a play. He did not *sabe* the plot; but the action was very good. Solomon waved his arms weakly and collapsed into a chair.

"If yore spring is run down, mebbe yuh can talk sense," suggested Buck. "Talk about that five thousand."

"O-o-o-oh!" wailed Solomon. "Talk sense? Did you ever lose five thousand? Could you talk sense if you did?"

"Lemme tell him," suggested Bush painfully.

"You—oh—" Solomon nodded weakly.

"Yes—sure. You tell 'im, Bush. After you finish telling about it, I'm going to kill you, I think."

Bush had long ago decided that Solomon's threats of death were on a par with his promises—never kept; so he proceeded to regale Buck Helm with the story of their great mistake. Buck was interested. Five thousand dollars was a lot of money. There was not the slightest doubt but that the Piegan Kid had laid up a lot of real trouble for himself. What Buck would do to him would be a scandal, even in the eyes of the buzzards.

Buck got more information than the Piegan Kid did. Buck found out about the rich ore vein. Solomon was too sick to object to Bush's description of the exact spot where the true vein cropped out of the ground. Buck was not a miner and had no interest in this; but the Piegan Kid, just outside the rear door, chuckled to himself.

"Yuh say he went out toward this here shack?" asked Buck.

"Yes," nodded Bush.

Buck considered this deeply. He knew that he was going to kill the Piegan Kid—if the Kid was still within reach. Perhaps the Kid had cached the money, and the killing would only satisfy his revenge. He turned to Solomon.

"Yeah, I can probably do this here job for yuh; but we ain't talked prices yet, pardner."

"Prices?" Solomon's voice was barely above a whisper and he stared blankly at Buck. "I paid five——"

"Not to me," grinned Buck. "I ain't seen no money."

"I—" Solomon was stuck for words.

"Might as well take a chance," said Bush. "Maybe this time it will be——"

"Maybe?" shrieked Solomon. "You 'maybe' me again and I kill you dead! Pig head!"

"If this mine is so danged valuable—" began Buck.

"Maybe he'll take it on commission," grinned Bush.

"More 'maybe!'" groaned Solomon. "Always like that. I tell you what I do; I give you a thousand dollars for this job. You get back that five thousand from that crook and I let you have four thousand of it. Five thousand is my top-price, mister." Solomon's voice creaked to a stop.

"Gimme the thousand," grunted Buck.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"I can't do nothin' tonight; but I'll do the job up right in the mornin'. You gimme the directions and quit worryin'. *Sabe?*"

"You will let him pick a fight with you?" asked Solomon eagerly. "This old Winters?"

"He'll shoot," warned Bush.

"Pick ——!" grunted Buck. "I play cinches."

"Sure, sure," nodded Solomon. "That's business."

Solomon's heart went out with that added thousand and the walls of his chest shrank visibly when Buck placed the money in his pocket, and went out of the front door.

Bush was slowly rolling a cigaret when Solomon came back and sat down. The atmosphere was funeral-like in it's density.

"Well," said Bush slowly, "that's settled, I hope."

"You hope, do you," weakly. "Always maybe and hope. Six thousand dollars! —— of my fathers! I wish I was a good shooter."

"Use a shotgun and pull the trigger with yore toe," advised Bush. "Yuh can't miss."

"Fool! How could I shoot anybody——"

THE rear door creaked open and the Piegan did stepped in, gun in hand. Solomon's voice failed him; but his mouth remained at full aperture. Bush's cigaret fell to his lap, where it smoldered in the wrinkles of his pants.

But Solomon's cunning did not completely desert him. He forced a smile, which he intended for a pleasantry; but it was the smile of a patient on an operating table, when the surgeon has informed him not to be surprized if he never recovers from the anesthetic.

"So soon," murmured Solomon, his jaws almost locked.

"Uh-huh," admitted the Kid, with a slight grin, keeping the gun pointed at the two men.

"Don't do that," begged Solomon. "Why should there be a gun between friends. I don't pay you to shoot me."

"Didja do the job already?" asked Bush, trying to extinguish the burning spot in his lap.

"Both of yuh get up," ordered the Kid. "Stand up."

There was nothing to do but obey. Solomon braced his flat feet and tried to stand erect; but his knees were very weak.

"Come on," ordered the Kid, throwing the door open.

"Why—why—" faltered Solomon, but the menace of the cocked pistol left the question unanswered.

He went out slowly and behind him went Bush Cleveland.

Luckily there was a moon; otherwise Solomon Kane would have been hard put to find a trail for his out-turned feet. The Kid led the pinto and hearded Solomon and Bush ahead of him. It was a long two miles to Solomon and Bush, because they knew not what was in store for them.

They knew where they were going. Solomon planted his feet carefully on the narrow trail and swore deep in his throat. He was not a good walker, and Bush seemed take delight in stepping on his heels, which extended considerably to the rear. Bush did not mean to hurt his boss; but he knew that a pistol muzzle was fairly close to his vertebrae, and the blamed thing might be easy on the trigger.

Just to be on the safe side, the Kid yelled to Winters as they came near the cabin, and the old man came to the door, with a lamp in his hand. He stared with undisguised amazement at Solomon and Bush. Both of them were perspiring freely and breathing heavily.

"Yuh mind if I herd 'em inside?" asked the Kid.

"No-o-o," drawled old Cale. "Bring 'em in."

Jennie and her mother stared at the Kid and his prisoners. Solomon slumped into a chair and stared at the floor. Bush sat down and began to roll a cigaret. He was not worrying about anything except his nerves.

"What does this mean?" asked old Cale, squinting at the Kid, who leaned against the doorway and grinned.

"These two *hombres* was kinda interested in yuh, old-timer; so I thought I'd bring 'em over to see yuh."

"They was, eh?" Old Cale glared at Solomon, but that worthy only settled lower into his chair.

"We dunno nothin'," declared Bush. "This —— crook drawed a gun and——"

"Hold on!" grunted the Kid. "Nobody asked you to buy into this game," and then he turned to old Cale.

"These two gents are goin' to tell yuh where the rich ore is located on yore property."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"That's a lie!" exploded Solomon, waving his fat hands. "How should we know where it is? How—what makes you think we know where it is? Bah!"

"I was at the back door," said the Kid softly. "You fellers talked kinda loud."

"Don't you believe him," begged Solomon. "He don't hear nothin'. He's a bad-man—a crook."

"I kinda thought yuh knowed where that vein was, Solomon," said old Cale. "Mind tellin' me where it is?"

Solomon shut his lips tightly. It seemed that he was playing a losing game; but he was game enough to keep his hole-card covered. The Kid smiled around at the others and walked to Bush. The tobacco and papers were lying on his knee and the Kid took them.

"Whatcha mean?" grunted Bush, making a reach for the smoking material; but the Kid put them in his hip pocket.

"Ask me for a smoke next time," grinned the Kid. Bush's cigaret was almost gone and he looked curiously at it. Suddenly it struck him that the Kid was going to keep him from smoking. He tried to knock the fire from the cigaret, thinking to save it, in case the Kid refused to supply more; but the paper unwrapped and the tobacco sifted to the floor.

A clock on a shelf tick-tocked loudly. It was nine o'clock. The Kid looked at Jennie and her mother.

"You folks might as well go to bed. I'm goin' to set up with these whipoorwills."

"You goin' to keep us here all night?" Solomon was properly indignant at such a thing.

"You try goin' before I tell yuh good-by," dared the Kid.

"I don't *sabe* it," said old Cale, "but I'm backin' this boy's play, y'betcha. I'll set up with you, young feller."

"Mind lettin' me have a smoke?" asked Bush.

The Kid shook his head.

"No, I don't mind; but yuh got to tell where that rich vein is first."

"You go to ——!" roared Solomon.

Bush frowned at Solomon and licked his lips.

"Who's goin' to smoke this cigaret, Sol?"

"Goin' to tell?" asked the Kid.

Bush swallowed with difficulty and rubbed the back of his hand across his lips.

"No! I dunno where it is."

"Use yore own judgment," grinned the Kid.

Midnight came. The four men were very silent. Bush had not asked for a cigaret; but the Kid could see that his nerves were growing tighter each minute. His eyes flashed to the clock and back to the Kid. Solomon sat deep in his chair, his head slumped between his shoulders. Once in a while his pig-like eyes would open and gaze with malevolance upon the Piegan Kid. No doubt, Solomon would have taken the chances of arrest or of being shot, if he could get back that five thousand dollars.

Old Cale Winters asked no questions. He knew that things were going to come his way; but just how, he was unable to see. The Kid occasionally rolled and smoked a cigaret, with evident satisfaction. Bush turned his head the other way and appeared to try and sleep; but the Kid knew that sleep was far from his mind.

The first lights of dawn seemed to touch the peaks. It would be an hour yet before it would be daylight. The Kid edged over to a front window and glued his face to the pane. He could see the dim outlines of the hills. As it grew lighter he could see a spot where the trail to Micaville wound in sight. The Kid watched this closely, and within fifteen minutes he was rewarded.

A man came around this point in the trail and disappeared, coming toward the cabin. The Kid grinned. He had made a good guess. Buck Helm was going to bushwhack old Cale Winters. About a hundred yards from the cabin was an outcropping of granite, brush covered, which stood about ten or twelve feet higher than the rest of the slope.

The Kid watched closely for quite a while. Suddenly he glimpsed Buck Helm as his body blocked out an open spot on the short sky-line. Buck was almost to his destination.

The Kid turned slowly and looked at old Cale.

"Got an extra gun, old-timer?"

The old man got to his feet and walked over to the corner, where he picked up a Winchester rifle. Without a word he handed the Kid his pistol and sat down again with the rifle across his lap. The Kid grinned and motioned the old man to follow him to the back of the room. Solomon roused up and glared at them, while Bush Cleveland's nerves twitched visibly.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"I'm goin' out the back winder," whispered the Kid. "You watch the clock, will yuh? In five minutes you tell Solomon Kane he can go."

"What's the idea?" Old Cale did not relish the idea of releasing them until he knew about that true vein.

"Idea's all right," said the Kid. "Let Bush go, too, if he wants to. He's harmless now."

"Yo're the doctor," muttered the old man resignedly as he let the Kid out of the rear window, keeping one eye on his prisoners.

The Kid circled the cabin and crept silently into a patch of mesquite. He had not been named Piegan for nothing. Silently but swiftly he made his way in a wide circle, coming in behind the rocky outcropping, where he knew the two-gun man waited for old Cale Winters.

He slipped off his boots, as an added precaution, and crept silently through the brush. Not a twig broke under his feet, nor a twig scraped his clothing. The light had increased until the details of the cabin were plain from that distance.

Clear out to the edge of the outcropping crept the Kid. He knew that he must be within a few feet of the gunman, although he could not see him. He slid softly to the very edge and peered down.

Just below him, almost in reach of his hand, was the gunman, kneeling in a tangle of brush. The Kid could see the top of his sombrero, part of his shoulders and the hand which held the gun.

To get closer would be almost impossible, as any noise would apprise the man of his danger. Suddenly the man lifted his gun, and the Kid glanced toward the house. The door had opened and Solomon Kane came out. The Kid knew it was Solomon Kane, but the gunman did not. He had never seen old Cale Winters; so he guessed that this hulk of a man, coming out of the door, must be the man he was after.

A second later he fired. The Kid had figured to use Solomon Kane to attract the gunman's attention, but he did not think the gunman would shoot so quickly.

At the crash of the gun the Kid launched himself over the ledge, while Solomon Kane, shocked by the bullet, reeled against the house. The Kid had his jump timed just right, but he did not allow for the loose piece of ledge, which broke with him as he jumped; and instead of landing on the broad back of Buck Helm he landed several feet short and his gun flew out of his hand.

Helm whirled on the Kid, shooting blindly. The bullet whined off a rock. Again he shot, but the bullet struck low, filling the Kid's eyes with sand. The Kid was diving forward by this time and his groping arms circled Helm's knees. Helm fired again—fired as he reeled backward and the bullet went wild again.

The battle looked unequal. Helm was a much larger man than the Kid. They crashed down into the bushes and both got to their feet. Helm tried to draw his other gun; but the Kid went into him, smashing him flat in the mouth. The Kid reached for his gun, but did not draw it. Helm yanked at his gun again and the Kid tore into him, smashing with both hands, forcing Helm to let go his gun.

Old Cale Winters was yelling from down by the cabin, but the Kid did not know what he was saying. Helm tore into him, striking and kicking. He threw the Kid back against the cliff and tried again to draw his gun; but the Kid came right back, grinning wickedly, and cut Helm's face with right and left hooks.

Helm mouthed curses and spat broken teeth, while he strove desperately to get that gun loose. The Kid bored into him, slashing like a panther, blinding Helm with a cross-fire of cutting blows to the face. Suddenly Helm lashed out with his foot.

Like a flash the Kid grabbed the foot in both hands, threw himself sidewise, and upset Helm, just as Helm managed to get his gun free. The Kid saw that the gun was loose and launched himself headlong into Helm, as the gun flashed almost in his face and powder burned the back of his neck.

They crashed together. The Kid rolled free with his vision filled with shooting stars. He thought that Helm had hit him on the head with the pistol; but a moment later he realized that his head had come in contact with Helm's jaw, and that Helm was knocked out cold.

He staggered over, tossed Helm's guns away and leaned against the rock. Suddenly he realized that Jennie and her father were beside him. He heard old Cale saying:

"Buck Helm, or I'm a liar! I know three sheriffs what hankers for his hide."

The Kid shook his head to clear his vision, and grinned at Jennie. Bush Cleveland

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

staggered into the scene, looking longingly at the Kid.

"I told him," chattered Bush, pointing at the old man. "I told him where that —— vein was. Gimme a smoke!"

Cale Winters nodded.

"Yeah, he told me. Solomon Kane's got a bullet in his shoulder."

The old man looked down at Buck Helm, who was not recovering any too fast, and said:

"Young feller, I reckon there's a sizable reward fer that critter. I don't *sabe* how yuh whipped him, cause he's a humdinger in a fight. Why didn't yuh shoot him? Gosha'mighty, yuh sure took a lot of chances."

"Costs money to shoot," grinned the Kid. "You take this here bad-man and collect on him. Mebbe it will give yuh somethin' to start minin' on. I don't want it."

Jennie stepped in close to the Kid and held out her hand.

"I don't know how you did it all; but I want to thank you."

The Kid took her hand, bashfully, but dropped it immediately. He had never shaken hands with a girl before.

"Yo're wu-welcome, ma'am," and then he turned to her father. "You'll take care of the rest of it, will yuh?"

"You ain't leavin' us, be yuh?"

"Yeah, I reckon I'll be driftin'. I don't stay long in any one place. Hope yuh all have luck with yore mine."

"But that is no way to do," complained Jennie. "You have done so much for us that we'd like to have you stay a while with us. Stay and get acquainted, won't you?"

The Piegan Kid shook his head slowly.

"No'm, I don't reckon so. I ain't much of a hand to get acquainted with folks. It don't always pay to know me too well."

"Isn't there anything we can do for you?"

"Well," the Kid looked at her for a moment. "Well, I reckon there's one thing yuh can do for me, ma'am—give me one of them there things yuh hold yore hair together with, will yuh?"

Jennie removed a hairpin from her hair, looked at it curiously and handed it to him. The Kid put it in his pocket.

"Well, I reckon I'll just say *adios*, folks. Pleased to meetcha. Goin' to be kinda hot today."

And without another word he turned, limped down to the cabin, where he mounted his pinto and rode away.

Old Cale Winters looked down at Helm, who was beginning to show signs of life. Helm was worth several dollars to the man who turned him over to the law. Bush Cleveland was rolling his inevitable cigaret and trying to absorb enough smoke to make up for what he had been denied. The fate of Solomon Kane—the punishment for their ill-fated scheme, had no interest for Bush.

Jennie Winter, likewise, had little interest in anything except her own musings, as she gazed off across the hills, where a man and a pinto horse was fast fading into the landscape.

Like a knight of old, who had gallantly ridden away, with only a lady's glove or kerchief, the Kid had asked less than they. He had saved her father's life at the risk of his own; very likely gave them the key to a vast wealth, yet all he asked——

"Dad," said Jennie, turning to her father, with misty eyes. "Dad, wasn't that a queer thing to ask for—a hairpin?"

"Yeah," admitted the old man, "it was queer. Young fellers has queer ideas, Jen. Likely wanted it to remember yuh by."

Jennie sighed and looked back across the hills. There had been little romance in her life. This knight of the dim trails had ridden into her life, performed a wonderful service, and ridden away. He gave much and asked little.

FAR out in the mesquite-covered hills the Piegan Kid reined in the pinto and looked back. From his pocket he took the hairpin, which he straightened out and bent into a small hook.

Then he took his pistol from its holster, inserted the hook into the muzzle, and, after a few ineffectual snags, drew out the tightly rolled thousand dollar bills.

He threw the hairpin away, put the bills inside his shirt and holstered his gun.

"This —— bankin' business almost got me killed," he grunted, unromantically and headed into the dawn of the desert hills.

Romance is what you leave behind.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

VINCE'S BRIDGE AT SAN JACINTO

by Lewis Appleton Barker

ON THE morning of the Battle of San Jacinto—which engagement did not begin until 3.30, P.M.—a council of war, consisting of six field officers, was called, at their suggestion, by General Houston. The little Texan army of 783 poorly armed and equipped patriots were encamped in the face of the Mexican Dictator, Santa Anna, with 1,400 veteran troops and artillery.

Although these officers were in ignorance of the fact, General Houston was aware that, in addition to these forces, the enemy had been reinforced at nine in the morning by 500 choice men under General Cos. On one side of them lay a deep marsh and the waters of San Jacinto Bay, and behind them, a stream called Buffalo Bayou, crossed about eight miles distant by Vince's Bridge, this being the only road communicating with the Brazos, and the sole avenue of escape in case of disaster. The Texans had effected a crossing of the bayou on the nineteenth, two days before, by means of swimming and the use of a leaky boat.

At the council the general submitted the question of whether they should take the initiative or await an attack. The two younger colonels favored the former course, but the four seniors demurred, alleging—not without truth—that for raw soldiery, with only two hundred bayonets and no artillery, to attack more than double their number, supported by cannon, on an open prairie, was unheard of. A proposition was made to the commander to construct a floating-bridge near at hand over Buffalo Bayou, that there might be some means of escape otherwise than Vince's Bridge, eight miles distant.

Ascertaining that materials could be found suitable for the purpose, Houston replied—

"We will postpone it awhile at all events."

He then dismissed the council, and determined to take the responsibility of giving battle.

In the mean time, he ordered his famous scout, Deaf Smith, with a companion, well armed and mounted, to take two axes which he had had them conceal early that morning, and make their way as rapidly as possible to the bridge, cut it down and burn it up, and return in equally swift order, thus cutting off all chance of escape for the vanquished, whoever that might prove to be. He had made up his mind to conquer or perish there. The fate of Texas was to be settled once for all.

"This," said Deaf Smith with his usual dry humor, "looks a good deal like a fight, general."

What a difference in the thoughts of Houston and those of his officers. While they were exercised about building a *new* bridge for use in event of defeat, he was preparing to cut down and *destroy* the *only existing* bridge in the neighborhood.

So that as the little army stood later about to charge, their hearts aflame with courage and their thoughts fixed on vengeance, the appearance of a rider dashing madly up on a horse covered with mire and foam, swinging an axe over his head, and crying—as he had been instructed to do—"I have cut down Vince's Bridge— Now fight for your lives and remember the Alamo," furnished the last touch and incentive—if, indeed, any such were needed—to make them fight as they did that day, losing seven men to the enemies' six hundred and thirty.

In the flight of the Mexicans that followed the fray, after the Texans had left on the ground where the battle commenced, more of the enemy than their own entire number, dead and dying, the hostile cavalry, being well mounted, made for where they supposed Vince's Bridge would be found. Hotly pursued by the victors, one of the most appalling spectacles of the day was the slaughter that ensued when the fugitive horsemen, finding the bridge, their last refuge, gone, some in their desperation spurred their horses down the steep bank, others dismounted and plunged into the stream, where some, entangled in their trappings, were dragged down with their mounts and others sank at once to the bottom, while those who avoided these fates were cut ruthlessly down by a deadly fire, which precluded absolutely all escape.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

A SOUND

A Complete Novelette

by

H. M. SUTHERLAND

THE old man leaned over the fire and stirred the pot of corn-meal mush industriously. Once he glanced across the hearth at the youth who was staring at the blazing logs, and seemed on the point of speaking, but apparently he changed his mind and turned again to his task. Near him stood a jar of milk on a stool, and on the floor close by a giant black cat was purring loudly. In the dim light the walls seemed to recede into the night that was coming down over the Kentucky hills.

The youth shook off his reverie and straightened.

"Why did you send for me, grandpa?" he asked. "Can't you tell me now?"

"It's a long story, Dave," replied the old mountaineer, shaking his head. "One I hadn't figgered on havin' to tell ye. Wait till atter supper."

A few minutes later he filled two large bowls from the kettle, poured in the milk and handed one across to his young kinsman. Silently they fell to eating.

"Thar's some cold meat an' co'n pone on the kitchen table ef ye want it."

The aged man nodded his head toward a door on the left, but the other only shrugged. When they had finished the youth carried the dishes and crock away and then stretched out in his chair before the fire, watching the grizzled old hillsman light his pipe with a sliver of wood.

"I warn't shore I ought to send fo' ye, Dave," mumbled the old patriarch almost apologetically. "I tried to figger it out some other way, but it seemed jes' about all thar was left fo' me to do. I hated to bust up yo' schoolin' that way. I aimed fo' ye to finish no matter what happened. But thar's wasn't nobody else I could depend on. Yo' kin, the Framins ovah in Letchah County 've kinda drifted off an'——"

"There's trouble then," interrupted the youth, sitting up suddenly.

"——'s busted loose ag'in—the old trouble, an' I had hoped that was all ovah. It's been nine years next month since the last fightin'—at the meetin'-house when yo' pa and Curt Farley and Ed Rutherford was killed."

"What's happened?"

"Yo' Uncle Dan was murdered last We'nesday—waylaid from the bushes."

"Who did it?"

The youth leaned forward, gripping his knees until the knuckles of his hand showed white through the skin.

"The sheriff arrested 'Moccasin Foot' Farley that atternoon—said he caught him coming outa the bushes a mile above the place whar Dan was found. I didn't ha'dly believe Moccasin could 'a' done it frum the bushes, but I reckon it was him."

"That's strange. They've been avoiding each other for all these years, and he could have waylaid him any time if he had wanted to. Have they any proof? Was Uncle Dan alive when they found him?"

"He was dead."

A hard tone crept into the old feudist's voice, and the manner in which the bushy, white eyebrows dropped recalled the boy's first memories of his grandfather fifteen years before, when he was probably the most feared man in the Kentucky hills.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"But grandpa, what can I do if they have Moccasin Foot arrested?"

"He broke jail Friday night. 'Raleigh Bill,' 'Lige an' Wayne held up the jailer, an' they made a clean getaway about midnight. They're layin' out in the woods somewhar on the head of Rock Castle Creek."

He hobbled over to the corner, took down a large caliber repeating-rifle and removed the oil-soaked rag which had been wrapped about the mechanism. He pulled the trigger-guard tentatively and, apparently satisfied that it was in working order, laid it across the youth's knees.

"I've kept yo' daddy's gun in good shape. Ye air the only Collingame left now. I'd go an' git him myself, but I'm gittin' too old. I can't git aroun' like I used to. An' I can't seem to shoot no mo'. Only yesti'day I missed a hawk settin' on the fence, an' he warn't mo' than sixty yards away. Boy, God knows I had hoped the Farley-Collingame trouble was dead. I figge ed ye could settle down in peace, an' I could come an' spend my last days with ye. But ye can't stay out now. Ye'll be alone ag'inst six, but ye're a Collingame, an' ye know what to do."

It was the longest speech Dave Collingame had ever heard his grandfather make. Tall, gaunt, taciturn, "Old Bart" had a certain aloofness about him that kept even his own kinsmen rather formal with him. Dave, as a lad, frankly was afraid of him, and something of the old fear came back for an instant.

When the message came to him in Louisville telling him to come home at once, he suspected that it was in some way connected with the old feud. He came with the intention of persuading his grandfather to let the law take its course, but now that he had heard the story he hesitated. Something like a thrill of excitement stirred him, and he wondered if there could be such a thing as the blood-call of the clan. He dismissed the thought with a shrug.

He closed his eyes for a couple of minutes, seeking the best way in which to explain his decision. There was a certain finality about the way in which the aged hillsman had given him the rifle that would make any explanation seem cowardly. For Old Bart there was only one law—that of the feudist, and instinctively Dave knew he would never agree to any substitute.

"Ye know that Rock Castle country," the old man was saying. "Ye ought to find him in a day or two. I'd look under that ledge of cliffs on the no'th side of the mountain. Raleigh Bill, 'Lige an' Wayne'll be with him, but ye can wait yo' chance. I wouldn't sta't till tomorrer."

"Has the sheriff made any attempt to recapture him?"

"He says he has, but I reckon he don't care much ef Moccasin gits away. Ye know, he allus did say yo' pa killed his brother Ed that time. Dan kept outa the sheriff's way to dodge trouble. Ef Moccasin hadn't been caught in them woods, I might 'a' suspicioned the sheriff."

"How did the sheriff happen to be on the spot?"

"He followed Dan and Moccasin. I hadn't told ye that Dan an' Moccasin met on the street down at the county seat the same day Dan was killed. You know, they hadn't seen each other since Moccasin swore to git Dan nine years ago. They come face to face, but they didn't draw. They looked at each other for a minute while ever'body got out of the way. Then they turned their backs on each other an' walked away. Two hours later Dan was killed as he come home down at the mouth of Cl'ar Fork."

"Did Moccasin confess?"

"He never opened his mouth while he was in jail 'cept to eat. The sheriff said he caught him comin' outa the woods at Fletch Powers' place. I reckon Moccasin done it er he wouldn't 'a' run away."

They lapsed into silence broken only by the slight hiss of water escaping from the burning hickory logs. Dave knew what was expected of him not only by his grandfather, but by the entire county as well. Even though the feud days were gone, he must live according to the old Collingame standards. Yet he knew he never could shoot from ambush.

"All right, grandpa, I'll get him."

Old Bart arose stiffly and came to Dave's side.

"I knew ye would, Dave. Ye're a Collingame an' ye'll be able to take care of yo'self. Ye'll have to go alone. An' come back hyar as soon as ye can."

He picked up the rifle, replaced the rags and hung the weapon on its accustomed pegs. Then he took down an old almanac and laborously began to spell out the words to the collection of strange facts printed at

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the bottom of each page. Dave sat looking into the blaze outlining his plan of action. He determined to see the sheriff first of all and try to get sworn in as a deputy. Then, if possible, he intended to bring his man in alive, but he dared not divulge this decision to his aged kinsmen. After it was done, there would be time for explanation.

EARLY the next morning he saddled his horse and left for the county seat, promising to be back by three that afternoon. Old Bart forced him to thrust an automatic in his pocket.

"Trouble comes when ye ain't lookin' fo' it," he declared.

Sheriff Rutherford was bending over his desk when Dave entered. He glanced up and seemed to grow rigid. His hand gradually worked toward an open drawer of his desk, the fingers curved stiffly as if ready to grasp the handle of a revolver.

"I wouldn't do that, sheriff." Dave's hands remained swinging loosely at his sides.

"What do you want?" His voice seemed abnormally high-pitched.

"I surely don't want any trouble, sheriff." Dave almost grinned at the palpable relief on the red-mottled face.

More than once he had heard that Rutherford's courage was debatable, particularly when his aids were not with him.

"You look so —— much like your Uncle Dan that fer a minute I didn't know what to think."

The sheriff was biting his upper lip nervously. Tiny beads of perspiration showed at the roots of his black hair, which was slicked back from his forehead.

"When did you git in, Dave?"

"Yesterday. Grandpa wired me."

"Then you know about your Uncle Dan. I've been up on Rock Castle headwaters twice, but I ain't seed hair nor hide of Moccasin. I reckon he's done skipped the country."

"That's what I came to see you about, sheriff. He's hiding up there. I'd stake my life on that. He won't try to get out until the excitement all dies down. We've got to get him."

"Yeh! How?"

"I'll find him if it takes a year. Then we'll go after him. Will you appoint me your deputy? I don't want any salary, and I won't serve after this job is finished. How about it?"

The sheriff thoughtfully bit off the end of a cigar. Apparently he was trying to fathom Dave's request.

"Why don't you go git him from the bushes?"

"I don't fight that way."

"Moccasin did."

"Can't they convict him then?"

"Mebbe." The sheriff shrugged. "I caught him comin' out of the bushes near where Dan was killed."

"Then I'll be satisfied to let a jury handle it. Will you name me as your deputy?"

"The law only allows me three fer this district, but since you offer to do it fer nothin' I don't see how I can refuse. All right! I'll fix it up. How long you goin' to be in town?"

"Not any longer than is absolutely necessary."

"Come back in an hour and sign the papers."

Dave nodded and left the office. He spent the hour purchasing food and cartridges, which he rolled into a pack inside a rain-coat and slung across his shoulders. He said nothing to Old Bart about his talk with the sheriff, letting the old man think his mission to town had been for his supplies. The aged feudist had spent the morning oiling an old pair of cow-skin boots until they were soft and pliable to enable the wearer to slip through the woods without making any noise. The sun was nearing the western hill-tops when Dave left the cabin. Old Bart followed to the gate.

"Git a fine bead on that gun," was his final instruction.

DAVE had about eight miles as the crow flies to traverse across the almost trackless woods, over Indian Ridge and down Cabin Creek, to the mouth of Rock Castle. By nightfall he intended to be well in the woods in which he knew his quarry to be hiding. He swung along with the ground-eating stride of the mountaineer, passing many familiar landmarks he had known as a boy.

As he neared the forks of the road on Indian River he was halted by a sudden flash of memory. Not ten years before he had stood and listened to a sermon on spirit mediums preached by the same man he now sought. Moccasin Foot, although he did

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

not profess to be a medium himself, was a firm believer in all things psychic, and never lost a chance to discourse on the subject whenever he could gather a knot of his people.

Moccasin Foot was known and feared throughout the mountains. A large number of the hill folk frankly declared he was leagued with the devil. Few, except his own three brothers, trusted him. Strange stories were told of him, tales so bizarre and uncanny that Dave believed most of them to be products of pure fancy.

The name Moccasin Foot was applied to him because of the ponderous moccasins he had made, and which he wore wherever he went. In his mysterious prowlings through the mountain fastnesses he tied his leathern foot-gear with the heels in front so that whatever tracks he made in the soft soil or snow pointed in the opposite direction from that which he was going.

His favorite weapon was a muzzle-loading "hog rifle," an heirloom which had been handed down to him through generations and with which he could drive bullet after bullet in the same hole. In addition to this gun he always carried a modern .38 caliber revolver and a huge naval "spy-glass." Dave himself had often caught the glint of sunlight from the surface of the lens from the top of some exceptionally high mountain-peak.

He lived alone in a tiny cabin perched high up near the sky-line about ten miles from the county seat. It was generally known, however, that he left this crude home and was gone for weeks at a time. Where he went no one knew, not even his brothers, who were good rivermen and were usually employed on some timber-cutting job in the vicinity. At some time or other on these excursions he had picked up a smattering of spiritual beliefs. He had two or three small paper-bound volumes on the subject, and he was never without one of them in his pocket.

All of this had the effect of making him a sort of a bogey man, and mothers used his name to frighten their children into obedience. Dave had never seen Moccasin Foot save for that one time, yet he had not been able to forget the face. When he talked not a muscle of him moved except his lips. His eyes occasionally strayed when speaking, but his eyelids never flickered. Yet Dave could not help feel that animal cunning lay behind that strange, grizzled mask.

A little after sunset Dave slipped into the bushes near the mouth of Rock Castle and began his cautious climb back toward the heart of the mountain. His objective was up along the benches near a spring of water he found once when hunting. He quickened his pace when the darkness began to settle with that speed peculiar to people of the mountains, and it was with difficulty that he found the place he sought.

He ate sparingly from his pack and then gathered a large pile of dry leaves and pine boughs. Not daring to build a fire because of the light, he wrapped himself in a blanket and tried to go to sleep. Accustomed to the street noises, the night sounds of the woods kept him awake for hours. Once he sat bolt upright, staring into the darkness and hardly daring to breathe. Only a few yards away there was a rustling in the leaves, and, as Dave threw aside the blanket, a quick pad and scurry of a frightened rabbit's feet caused him to laugh softly.

All the next day Dave combed the almost illimitable forest, but to no avail. The fugitives had left no trace. Late that afternoon he crossed over to a short ridge jutting out toward the river. The climb was one of the most difficult he had attempted, leading up a rocky ravine to a series of high precipices at the crest. He was disappointed when he had carefully covered the stretch along the base of the cliffs, because he had been confident that some trace of the camp would be found there.

It was only a matter of fifty yards to the gap, on the other side of which lay the river. On gaining the top he stood for a moment idly gazing at the apparently endless stretches of timber down the slope to Indian River and on the opposite hills. His eye swept back from the river toward the point where he was standing. The woods were open, the underbrush having been burned out a few years previously, which left only the trees and saplings.

A movement off to the left and up near the crest caught his eye. A man was climbing a path up the very face of the hill. He was carrying what appeared to be a pail of water, holding it carefully as he lithely swung upward by grasping to the saplings and pulling. Instinctively Dave crouched behind a clump of bushes and

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

settled down in such a position that he was completely screened and still was able to keep the fugitive within his range of vision.

The man reached the foot of a cliff about seventy-five yards straight across from Dave and disappeared. That it was the hiding-place of the Farley gang Dave did not doubt for an instant, although he had never seen the man before. He watched the opening intently for Moccasin Foot, whom he knew he would recognize. As if in answer to his wish, the hillsman he sought stepped into the open and raised his giant spy-glass. He seemed to be scanning the little path which ran along the river's edge.

When he first caught sight of Moccasin, Dave felt a thrill of elation. The blood pounded in his ears, and his hand nervously sought the trigger. An ungovernable rage seized him, chilled the glow in his veins and steeled his hands. He forgot his decision, his promise to the sheriff, everything except that his hereditary enemy was in range. Slowly he brought his rifle to his shoulder and dropped his cheek to the stock. In the fine-cut groove he dropped the bead until only the silver tip showed and this he drew down until it covered a point just under Moccasin Foot's raised elbow in the region of the heart. As his finger closed on the trigger, Moccasin Foot let his arm fall and turned, spoiling Dave's aim.

The fugitive leaned the glass against a tree and sat down on a stone. As Dave again leveled his gun, a small dog, a typical mountain mongrel, came hobbling on three legs to the feet of the feudsman. Again Dave lowered his gun and watched Moccasin lift the injured foot and examine it. Tearing a piece of cloth from his shirt-sleeve, he bandaged it and patted the cur's head sympathetically. Then he straightened up, offering a perfect target, but Dave's arm lay motionless across the rifle-barrel.

"I can't do it," he muttered to himself. "Not this way."

For a long time Dave lay there thinking, wondering what should be his course of action. It would be suicidal to come out in the open. Raleigh Bill was known as the quickest shot in the hills. Dave's better judgment told him that his original plan was the best. For the moment he had forgotten that he was only seeking to find the fugitive and to report to the sheriff. When he started to worm his way back through the bushes, he found that he was weak from the nervous reaction, and he dropped his head on his arms. When he looked up again Moccasin Foot had disappeared.

He wriggled backward for a few yards and then arose and plunged noiselessly into the bushes. It was almost midnight when he reached the county seat, and the streets were dark and practically deserted. After half an hour's search he found the sheriff playing pool in the back room above Bob Beavers' bowling-alleys. When Dave appeared in the doorway, the sheriff racked his cue without a word and then walked over and awakened his deputy, who was asleep on a chair.

"You found him?" questioned the officer as soon as they were safely outside.

Dave grunted assent in the same guarded tone.

"Where?"

"First gap north of the Towers on the Indian River side—under that line of cliffs high up near the top."

Dave kept pace with the officer as he crossed the street toward his office in the court house.

"Hidin' deep back in the hills," muttered the sheriff. "Mighty near impossible to git him outa there. Anybody with him?"

"I saw one, but there were others, I'm sure."

"Um! Probably all four of 'em stayin' there together."

He led the way through the dark halls and lighted an oil lamp in his office.

"Well, what do you think?" continued the sheriff, indicating Dave. "Will it be necessary to get a posse and starve 'em out?"

"Aren't the three of us enough?" broke in Dave sharply.

Something in the sheriff's tone nettled him. He felt an antagonism he was scarcely able to control each time he talked to the officer.

"We'd be takin' an awful long chance," countered Rutherford.

"We can catch the others off their guard," offered the deputy. "They're bound to sleep sometime."

The sheriff glanced at the deputy and then at Dave. He seemed to be on the point of making a further excuse, but apparently thought better of it. He shrugged.

"All right! We'll look 'em over and see

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

what we can do. How long does it take to get there?"

"I can put you in the gap by daylight," said Dave, "that is if you will start now."

The sheriff buckled on his huge holsters and cartridge belt which carried two heavy .38 special revolvers. From his shoulder to his waist on each side ran a long row of stubby, leaden cartridges. The deputy slipped an extra automatic magazine in his pocket, caught up a Winchester rifle and stood ready. Five minutes later they were stealing through the night in the direction of Rock Castle Creek.

AT A few minutes past three they entered the woods and began the painful difficult climb up the mountain over fallen trees and through thick underbrush. Although Dave had spent the most of his life in the woods the two years of inaction in school had taken from him the tireless speed he had once known. But despite this he slipped through the tangled brush with a celerity that taxed the powers of the sheriff and deputy. Twice, at their request, a brief halt was made.

As the hour of four approached even the stars grew dim and the pitchy darkness that precedes the coming of dawn settled down over the woods so intensely that Dave was forced to make his way forward by instinct. Not a sound was to be heard save for the occasional swish of a leafy bush against one of the three. Even the night thrushes were stilled.

When he reached the gap Dave halted and waited for the sheriff and deputy to draw near. When they loomed beside him, he gave a low warning.

"Is this the place?"

The sheriff whispered the question so hoarsely that Dave shot an apprehensive glance toward the left, half-expecting the Farley clan to open fire.

"Yes, the camp is under a cliff over here to the left about seventy-five yards—up above us a little."

Dave was searching for the dying glow of a camp-fire, even though he knew that Moccasin Foot and his brother would not dare light one.

"One of 'em's more'n likely on guard now," said the sheriff in a barely audible tone. "Watch now, that you don't step on a stick or any leaves that'll make a noise. We've got to hunt —— good hidin'-places or Moccasin'll spy us out with that telescope glass of his."

Keeping close together all three of them crawled back in the same clump of bushes in which Dave had hidden. In the midst of the thicket they found an old, partially decayed log. Quietly they sank down behind it, each seeking a comfortable position to await the coming of the dawn.

The first herald of its approach was a faint cock-crow coming from some cabin far down on Indian River. Then from somewhere down in the woods below echoed the sleepy call of an owl to its mate. Slowly the light in the east increased its opalescent glow, hanging a gray pall over the trees as the fog and mist drifted upward from the river. The dew on the foliage began to drop almost like a gentle rain, and the sounds of the night gave way to the lyrics of early morning.

Eagerly Dave and the two officers sought to pierce the swirling blanket in the direction of the cave. Not a sound came from the base of the cliff, which in the vague morning light seemed to be deserted. Knowing that the Farleys, from force of habit, would be up with the dawn, Dave began to fear that they had fled during the night. He wondered whether or not Moccasin Foot's keen eye had detected his presence on the previous afternoon. With every sense alert he lay peering over the log with his eyes glued on the spot where he had seen his quarry appear.

Seemingly arising out of the ground, the man they wanted stood in the cave-mouth. His appearance was so sudden that Dave rubbed his eyes in amazement. One instant there was nothing and the next—Moccasin Foot tall, grim, mask-like and showing no indications of having been asleep. He stood motionless, apparently listening for the things he could not see through the mist.

A minute later one of the brothers joined him. Moccasin Foot handed him a pail and the latter started down toward the river without a word. The fugitive then selected several billets of wood and tossed them over at the base of the rocks near the cave-mouth.

"That's Wayne," whispered the sheriff, indicating the man with the water-pail. "Wonder where the t'other two are?"

He raised his head cautiously and then suddenly crouched.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"There's Raleigh Bill. They must've stayed in the cave while Moccasin stood guard."

"Then we're stuck hyar fo' the day, ain't we?" asked the deputy.

"Um!" grunted the sheriff under his breath. "Looks like we might have a long spell of waitin'."

In a short time the four brothers had a fire under the coffee-pot and bacon sizzling in the pan. Dave was almost sure he could detect the odor of the breakfast in the air, and the pangs of hunger caused him unconsciously to reach for a cigaret. The sheriff shook his head warningly. With regret Dave remembered throwing away his pack of food to make speed the night before.

The fire under the pan gave off no perceptible smoke, indicating that they were taking no chance of discovery by burning other than dried white oak with the bark peeled off. Dave was glad when the four had finished their breakfast and put the coffee-pot out of sight. Soon afterward Wayne left, presumably to bring back food, since he carried a small basket. The other three disposed themselves on the leaves near the fire, keeping a close watch on all approaches and carrying on an intermittent conversation.

"Which one is Raleigh Bill?" asked Dave, leaning close to the sheriff.

He remembered many strange tales he had heard about Moccasin Foot's younger brother—tales which made of him the most famous shot in a country where all are expert marksmen.

"The one leanin' back against that pine-stump," replied the sheriff, without looking up.

Dave studied the feudsman closely. Time and again he had heard recounted the exploits with both rifle and revolver of this sinewy, sharp-featured mountaineer. One story he recalled particularly in which the hillsman had performed a feat which seemed extraordinary.

Employed as a special officer at a nearby coal operation during a strike, Raleigh Bill had an altercation with Black Diamond, a giant negro, who unexpectedly pulled a gun and shot the officer through the lung. Raleigh Bill half-conscious, crumpled to the ground while Black Diamond fled down the street dodging in a zigzag course in order to present a more difficult target.

A friend rushed to the side of the fallen officer and reached for the revolver in his holster. The action apparently had aroused Raleigh Bill. He opened his eyes, propped himself up on one elbow and fired once at his fleeing assailant. Black Diamond dropped dead with a bullet squarely through the base of his brain.

Remembering this story and others of its kind, Dave watched him with interest. Even from the distance he could see that Raleigh Bill's every action was lightning-quick. He was small compared with his brothers, who were all in the neighborhood of six feet. He was slightly stooped and seemed to be too slender and underdeveloped to accomplish the feats of strength and agility with which he was credited. Through a pair of binoculars the deputy carried, Dave could see that Raleigh Bill's features were sharp and his long, rather hooked nose somehow reminded Dave of the hawk's beak. And there appeared to be something of the hawk in his eye.

ABSORBED in his study of the fugitives, it seemed to Dave that only a short time had passed when Wayne returned with his basket. He placed it on a shelving rock and sat down, fanning himself with his huge Stetson.

"Whar'd he get that grub so quick?" queried the deputy. "Thar's no cabin anywhar close."

"Somebody met him or hid it at some marked place," volunteered the sheriff.

Raleigh Bill brought out a deck of cards and he, Wayne and 'Lige gathered about a flat stone. Moccasin Foot stood guard, glancing at the players' hands occasionally, but for the most part looking off into the woods, his long spy-glass sweeping around in circles on each side. An hour or so later they began munching the contents of the basket and drinking what appeared to be buttermilk which they poured from a glass fruit-jar. Dave found a couple of sprigs of wintergreen, which he chewed ravenously.

"If this keeps up much longer, Ab," whispered the sheriff to his deputy, "you're goin' to have to scoot out after something to eat. I'm —— if I can stand this. I'm so hungry I could eat sole-leather."

"Maybe they'll go to sleep soon," answered Ab hopefully.

"They stick closer to Moccasin than ticks to a dog's ear."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Grunting with disgust, the sheriff turned over on his back and drew his hat low over his eyes. A gray squirrel, suddenly frightened at some untoward noise, began barking down the hillside a few yards. Getting no response, it lapsed into a few long wails and then grew silent. A drowsiness settled down over the woods, and Dave closed his eyes and tried to sleep.

He didn't realize that he had dozed off until he felt some one gently shaking his shoulder. He started up, but sank behind the log again at a signal from the sheriff. Peering out, he saw that the three brothers were still absorbed in their game, but Moccasin Foot was busily engaged in an examination of the mechanism of his repeating-rifle.

The naval glass was fastened to a strap and hung to his shoulder, and apparently he had discarded his hog-rifle for a weapon with which he could fire faster in case it was necessary. Stooping, he picked up a small paper-bound book and then started climbing straight up the hillside toward the highest peak.

"Gad! We're lucky," breathed the sheriff. "He's goin' to stand guard on top of the mountain. We'll get him shore. Wait till he gets outa sight."

Twenty yards above the cave-mouth he disappeared in a fringe of bushes which skirted the top of the cliffs. His companions were hunched low over the cards and did not appear to have noticed his going.

Giving Moccasin Foot a quarter of an hour's lead, the sheriff motioned Dave and the deputy to follow. Inch by inch they edged their way back through the ivy bushes until the brow of the gap cut the cave-mouth from sight. Then they plunged into the deeper shadows of the woods and circled around back of the peak on which Moccasin Foot had taken up his vigil.

Choosing the north side of the bluff, which was covered with a thick growth of rhododendron, they pushed upward, stopping every few minutes to study the lay of the land. The sheriff led with Dave and the deputy close behind. A peculiar creaking sound attracted Dave's attention. He had heard it on the previous night, but thought it was the sheriff's shoes and said nothing about it. In the absolute silence as they crept through the bushes, the sound was dangerously loud.

"What is that creaking about you, sheriff?" Dave whispered when they had stopped again.

"It's this —— cartridge belt and holster." He ran his hand under the leather and examined it. "I've been layin' off to have it fixed for six months, but seems like I can't ever think to get it done. See? The cartridge-loop leather is busted loose from the belt. When I walk they rub together. I reckon I'd better take it off or Moccasin Foot'll hear it."

Suiting his word with action, he hung the holsters across a bush and turned back to the hill with his revolver in his hand.

When they reached a point about thirty yards from the top they stopped for final instructions. The deputy was sent off to the left with the intention of getting in behind the fugitive and preventing his escape in the direction of the cave. The sheriff went over to the right, leaving Dave to make his way straight up the point. Picking his steps carefully, Dave made rapid progress and in a short time was able to see the sky-line breaking through the trees just above.

He flattened on the ground and searched every foot of the ground across the knoll which was not covered by shrubbery. Inch by inch he crawled through a clump of huckleberry bushes, keeping his rifle in readiness before him. Seeing an open space just in front, he made toward it, but just as he freed himself of the tangled undergrowth he froze in his tracks.

"Hands up!"

For an instant Dave believed that he was covered, but with the next command he recognized the tones of the sheriff.

"Drop that gun!"

A clatter in the leaves told Dave that the order had been obeyed. Moccasin Foot and the sheriff were completely hidden behind a fringe of bushes on the brow of the point opposite, and Dave hurriedly crossed over.

The feudsman was standing with his hands half-lifted and was staring at the sheriff with the mask-face showing no emotion whatever. He didn't even glance around when Dave spoke in a guarded tone.

"The handcuffs, sheriff! Shall I put them on him?"

"S-s-sh!" The sheriff held up his hand and shot an apprehensive look back down toward the cliffs below. "They'll hear you. Here!"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

He tossed the handcuffs to Dave, who slipped them on the prisoner without encountering any resistance. When the deputy reached them, the party made ready to start. Moccasin Foot slung his spy-glass across his shoulder, picked up his paper-bound book, and thrust it in his pocket. Then he reached for his rifle.

"Stop!" The sheriff's voice was barely audible, but Moccasin Foot straightened with alacrity.

"Can't I take the gun with me?" Moccasin Foot's tone was pitched so low that Dave had difficulty in understanding him. "I kin carry it an' leave it with the jailor 'til somebody comes an' gits it."

The sheriff's only reply was to reach for Moccasin's arm.

"Ye kin unload the mag'zine an' break down the trigger-guard," continued Moccasin plaintively. "Ef ye hear me close it, ye kin shoot. Ain't that fair, sheriff?"

"——, you ain't never goin' to get a chance to use it again," said the sheriff.

He ejected the cartridges, looked through the barrel and handed the weapon across to the prisoner.

"Hurry up!" he commanded as Moccasin Foot caught it and let the butt fall to the ground.

Then casually Moccasin Foot raised the barrel to his lips. Pursing his mouth, he blew into the gun, and the woods echoed with a shrill blast that could be heard for miles.

"——!"

The sheriff leaped six feet and knocked the rifle from Moccasin Foot's hands, sending it flying into the bushes. He stood over his prisoner, clinching his hands as if to strike. But Moccasin Foot stood his ground without flinching, his head poised as if listening for an answering signal.

That Moccasin Foot had given the rescue signal of the clan, Dave did not have any doubt. It had been in use back in the old feud days, and there had been conclusive evidence at various times that, not only were the hillsmen able to signal, but could talk to each other over the hills through their gun-barrels by a primitive code of short and long blasts.

Knowing that the signal would bring the three brothers in on the sheriff's posse in a few minutes, Dave was anxious to get out of the woods as soon as possible. It was strange, he thought, but he bore no resentment against Moccasin Foot. In truth he felt something akin to admiration for the cunning and sagacity the feudsman had exhibited.

With a shove the sheriff sent Moccasin Foot stumbling down the hill and plunged after him. Dave clung close to his heels, glancing back over his shoulder at intervals and half-expecting to see Raleigh Bill break into view through the bushes. The deputy dropped back slightly to cover the hasty retreat.

They swung down a small ravine which was lined on each side with huckleberry bushes. The going was rough, and often they were forced to climb over obstructions which delayed them so much that Dave was unable to understand why the rescuers did not close in. Absolutely no sound indicating that the signal had been heard, had come to them.

For fifteen minutes they pushed steadily down the ravine, the prisoner keeping pace with apparent confidence that he would be rescued. Not once did he attempt to impede progress. Perhaps he feared the sheriff, but there was something in his face that belied fear. The lengthening shadows told Dave that darkness would be upon them in a short time. Two miles of pathless forest lay between them and the open road. Even then they would have to pass three or four small cabins the occupants of which were known to be on friendly terms with the Farleys.

SUDDENLY from the top of the mountain peak where Moccasin Foot had been captured came the penetrating blast of an answering signal. The sheriff looked back and swore beneath his breath. Not even the flicker of an eyelash indicated that Moccasin Foot had heard. Again the blast echoed through the hills, reverberating down the ravine and dying away in the distance. A third time it sounded shrill and piercing, and almost immediately there came a reply from somewhere down the mountain range in the direction of the road toward which they were heading.

"They'll be closin' in on us," declared the sheriff apprehensively. "That last signal is between us and the road, an' we'll have to pass him. They'll all work toward him and head us off."

His words were answered by a signal

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

coming apparently from somewhere near the head of the ravine they had followed. Then another gun-barrel took up the weird sound far down the mountainside. Dave counted six distinct signals coming from as many different parts of the forest. Knowing that there were only three men in the cave, he was at a loss to account for it. Evidently others of the clan were always within easy reach. He remembered that his grandfather had told him he would be "one ag'in' six."

With odds two to one against them Dave sprang forward at a faster pace, but even then found that he was not gaining on the sheriff. From the signals it was evident that the hillsmen were guiding each other with their gun-barrel talk. At times the signals were sent out in a series of short and long blasts and at others merely long blasts with monotonous regularity which, Dave imagined, was something similar to the tom-tom talk in the African jungles and Chinese mountains.

Four of the clan seemed to be following behind, two on the left, one on the right, and one coming down the ravine. The two others on the hills down near the road were drawing closer together. Suddenly a loud, blood-freezing wail resounded from the ridge which ran from the gap down toward the road ending in a high point with a jutting crag which overlooked the entire country. The new signal was answered by each of the six guns already in the chase.

"That was Raleigh Bill," muttered the sheriff. "He carries a gun with the longest barrel of anybody in the mountains. He's on them cliffs, an' he's got the keenest eye in the hills. We'll never pass him without bein' seen."

Something in the sheriff's tone caused Dave to glance up quickly. The man's face was pasty white, and his hands trembled preceptibly as he unlocked one of the wristlets on Moccasin Foot's hands and fastened it on his own arm. For an instant the sheriff's palpable fear carried to Dave a thrill of danger, but he threw it off, and in its place there came a feeling of disgust at the apparent cowardice of the officer.

Raleigh Bill was signaling steadily. At intervals he was answered by one of the others and always from a widely different point. The Farleys were traveling fast, and Dave imagined that he could see Raleigh Bill calling up his forces and guiding each man to a strategic point.

"Listen, sheriff!" It was the deputy speaking in a tone that betrayed his anxiety. "We ain't got a chance to git Moccasin in if we foller this creek. They'll nab us in spite o' ——. We're runnin' right into 'em. There's a chance——"

"A chance? What is it?" The sheriff's voice was hoarse.

"We'll split," replied the deputy shortly. "You cut across the hill at the next ridge and go down Pinnacle Creek to the road. They're expectin' you to do that anyway, an' they've got a man watchin' that path now. I can tell by the signals!"

"Turn Moccasin loose?" the sheriff interrupted.

In his voice Dave recognized a feeling of relief.

"No, me and Dave'll take him on down and git him in."

"Can you do it?"

The sheriff glanced from the deputy to Dave as if seeking confirmation to his hope. It was evident that all he wanted was a chance to run for it.

"Shore!" The deputy, apparently, was anxious to be rid of his superior officer. "They won't foller us. They'll see you goin' through the bushes an' call in all the others to chase you. That'll give us a clear field."

"But they might——."

The sheriff appeared doubtful.

"You run the chance, but it's worth it," interrupted the deputy. "It's up to you to make a lot of noise as you climb that ridge. You'd better scoot."

Without a word the sheriff slipped his arm from the wristlet and handed the key to the handcuffs over to his assistant. Then he turned and leaped up the bank, disappearing almost immediately. Although Dave listened intently, the sheriff made no sounds that would indicate his presence to the pursuers.

"The —— coward," muttered the deputy. "He'll cut across that mountain like —— after a bee-martin. They'll never see hide nor hair of him."

Hugging the banks of the little ravine for whatever protection they afforded, Dave and the deputy began a careful and slow march toward the road. Every few minutes they stopped and listened to the signalers, who seemingly were not aware of the ruse

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

to draw them off. Closer they came, until it seemed that they were only a couple of hundred yards away, and Dave and the deputy were preparing to fight it out when a warning shot echoed from somewhere up the ridge the sheriff had taken.

"It worked," said the deputy in a suppressed tone. "They're after him, but they'll have to do some fast shooting if they git him. Wait!"

Two of the signals were working in staccato blasts, answered every few minutes by the others which seemed to be converging in on the ridge behind them. A feeling of relief swept over Dave—relief mixed with exultation at having tricked the hillsmen. He plunged forward recklessly, seeking the open places in order to gain greater speed. But the long wail from the top of the precipice further down the hollow brought him to an abrupt halt.

"We've got to pass Raleigh Bill yet," cautioned the deputy. "And that's goin' to be the toughest job we've had today. Thank God, it's gittin' dark. When we git in his range we'll lay low till it gits too dark for him to see us."

A half-mile farther down the hollow they crept into a thick clump of bushes and remained hidden until they felt that the shadows would cover their movements. Then with extreme caution they made their way almost directly under the giant cliff on which Raleigh Bill had taken his position. At each step Dave expected to hear the burst of a rifle-shot and hear the singing bullet about his ears. Twice Moccasin Foot deliberately ran into shrubbery which the deputy had avoided, and each time Dave involuntarily crouched at the sound.

The precipice loomed up dark and foreboding, but the sky-line showed faintly at the top. Near the edge on the highest point stood a large tree, and at the roots was a rounded object which appeared to be a man seated motionless. Dave signaled a halt with a barely preceptible sound and watched the object intently.

A gun-barrel blast came from the opposite mountainside near the gap through which the sheriff had gone. As its echoes died away, the dark form at the foot of the pine tree arose and remained rigid for an instant. The deputy's hand closed over Moccasin's mouth, to which the feudsman submitted without a struggle. Dave hardly dared to breathe for a space of thirty seconds. They saw the figure, silhouetted against the sky, raise the gun and again the weird wail—a quavering admission of defeat—resounded through the darkening woods. Then Raleigh Bill disappeared.

Complete darkness had fallen before the little party dared come out of its hiding-place, and even then Dave, who set the pace, was careful not to make any untoward noise as they broke through the underbrush to the road. Once on the county highway Dave felt comparatively safe, but neither he nor the deputy slackened their pace until they reached the county seat.

When they had locked Moccasin Foot safely in his old cell, Dave and the deputy decided to ask for a volunteer guard to prevent another jail break. They met the sheriff with several men at his heels.

"It worked!" cried the officer, joyously clapping Dave on the back. "Did you have any trouble?"

"Not a bit," replied the deputy. "What happened to you. I thought I heard a shot."

"Never touched me. They chased me clean down Pinnacle Creek, but I showed 'em a clean pair of heels." The sheriff laughed loudly. "I knew that if they follered me, you two would be safe, so I kept goin'."

Dave studied the sheriff's face by the dim light of the lanterns. Not a trace of the abject fear he had exhibited a few hours earlier was to be seen. He swaggered through his bluff of tricking the hillsmen, and apparently the men who were with him believed everything he said. Dave was on the point of showing him up, but a frown of warning from the deputy caused him to hesitate.

"I was gettin' worried about you," the sheriff was saying, "and I had just got these men ready to start a search with me, when I heard you'd got in with Moccasin. Good work, boys!"

He turned to the crowd behind him.

"Jim, you and Buck, Chris, and Al and Martin will have to stand guard tonight. I don't think anything'll happen, but you never can tell. Tomorrow I'll get a regular guard an' a machine-gun here. Keep your eyes peeled, boys."

Taking Dave and the deputy by the arms, he marched across to the hotel with them.

"I got a room for you boys till after the trial," he said when they had reached the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

door. "I want you both to stick around. I may need you. Your bills will be paid by the State."

"Court opens next week, doesn't it?" asked the deputy.

"Monday mornin' at nine o'clock, an' Moccasin's trial is the first on the docket."

"That's quick work," interrupted Dave.

"The case was already docketed before Moccasin got away," explained the sheriff. "Well, get to sleep boys and rest up. This trouble ain't over yet. You're liable to have a hot time durin' the trial."

He turned and disappeared in the darkness.

BY HALF-PAST eight on Monday morning the streets of the county seat were filled with mountaineers who gathered in small groups and discussed the probable outcome of the trial. Among the first arrivals was "Ol' Aunt Polly" Varnon with her inevitable basket of gingerbread cookies, which she sold near the court-house door. The two stores were crowded, although little trading was done besides an occasional plug of chewing tobacco or stick candy.

Not one of the Farley or Collingame clansmen was to be seen. Of course, the three brothers of Moccasin Foot were hiding out because of the jail delivery, but a score of his more distant relatives were expected momentarily. The Collingames from Letcher County, cousins of Dave, had announced the intention of seeing the trial through. The possibility of a renewal of the old feud kept the little town keyed high with expectancy.

Dave felt the tension that swayed every one about him, and his blood tingled with the excitement. He watched the streets, half-expecting to see his grandfather stalk into town, and it was with a distinct sense of relief that he heard of the old man's intention to stay "out of the mess Dave had got into by his —— chicken-heartedness."

Soon after the sheriff had announced that "Court was now open," Dave left the hotel porch and started across the street toward the court-house. As he reached the entrance a sudden clatter of hoof-beats attracted his attention. A dozen men, riding in close formation, approached swiftly and then swerved into a hitching-alley fifty yards away.

"That's the Collingames from Letchah," he heard a by-stander say, but a close scrutiny failed to bring to him recognition of any of the horsemen.

He had met a few of his cousins at various times, but that had been years before. But their arrival brought him a sense of security in case anything did happen in the court-room.

As Dave entered the building he ran into the deputy, who was searching each men who passed in.

"What's the idea?" Dave enquired.

"I'm lookin' fo' guns, but you can keep yours." The deputy grinned. "You may need it. There's a bunch of Farleys inside."

The selection of the jury was under way when Dave reached the railing. Seeing no vacant seat, he stared about irresolutely. The sheriff motioned him to a chair inside, near the jury box.

The trial progressed rapidly. Little difficulty was encountered in choosing the jurors, and the court was ready for the examination of witnesses with a celerity that was bewildering. Moccasin Foot sat in the prisoner's box, his face the same inscrutable mask it had been on the day of his capture. Occasionally his eyes roved over the room, but each time it was apparent he did not discover what he was seeking. Several times Dave caught him staring at the sheriff, and in his eyes there seemed to be something that suggested implacable hate.

The greater part of the day was taken up in questioning character witnesses, but late in the afternoon the sheriff, who was the chief witness for the State, took the stand. His story was succinct. He told of following Moccasin Foot and Collingame after the meeting on the street, of hearing the echoes of the shots which killed Collingame, and of capturing Moccasin Foot as he came out of the woods not a mile away from the scene. He submitted to the jury the gun he had taken from the accused at the time of the arrest together with two bullets which had been taken from the body of the deceased and which fitted the gun perfectly.

Aside from two or three questions on minor details, the counsel for the defense was silent. He seemed to sense the tide of sentiment against his client, and his cross-examination was quickly over. Every one knew that his appeal to the jury would be purely emotional, a method which had

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

brought him amazing success in previous cases.

Moccasin Foot made a flat denial. He declared that he had started home after his encounter with Collingame on the street, that he had taken a short cut through the woods at the mouth of Clear Fork, that he had heard two shots, but had paid slight attention to them, and that he had been arrested as he came out of the woods and accused of the murder.

Under cross-examination he reiterated his statements monotonously while the jurors gazed at him in evident disbelief. He admitted owning the gun exhibited, a .38 caliber special, but swore that he had not fired it for more than a month. When he left the stand, court adjourned for the day.

That night Dave found the deputy sitting in a dark corner of the hotel porch. Near by a half dozen of the Collingames were talking with apparent unconcern, yet something about them suggested watchfulness. Dave nodded to a couple of them and was confident he hadn't been recognized.

Dave sat down beside the deputy.

"Looks like it is going to be a tame affair after all," he conjectured.

"Don't you fool yourself," replied the deputy. "Nothin's goin' to happen till the verdict is reached. Then's the time I'm goin' to hunt a hole till the smoke clears."

"How many of the Farleys are here?"

"About twenty. Most of them are that Puckett gang—kinfolks from acrost the State line. They're at the other hotel. They came in town today in twos and threes so as not to attract any attention."

"Any danger of a street fight tonight?"

"No. If there's goin' to be any shootin' it'll start in the court-house when the jury comes down. Then there'll be trouble whichever way the cat jumps. If Moccasin's found guilty, the Farleys'll start somethin' an' if he's turned loose, the Collingames'll go crazy and open up with their guns till they git him."

"But I thought you searched them at the door for guns."

"Shore. I felt over ever' Farley an' Collingame that passed me today an' I never found a gun. I searched 'em good, too, but I'll bet even money there were twenty-five of them .41 caliber derringers smuggled in somehow. You catch a Farley or Collingame without his gun if you can. They don't believe in it."

"Were there any guards in the court-room today? I didn't see any."

"They don't stand up with their guns in their hands to show ever'body who they are. There was twenty special officers scattered around keepin' a skinned eye on ever' man who came in."

THE night passed quietly and when court reconvened Dave and the deputy were on hand early. The counsel for the defense lived up to his reputation and made a moving appeal which for the moment seemed to swing the sentiment of the crowd toward the accused. Then the prosecuting attorney opened his attack. He was a gaunt and cadaverous hillsman whom every man in the court-room knew and, to a certain extent, feared.

As he reviewed the case the spectators grew quiet and the jurors leaned forward listening intently. Dave, while watching him, became aware of a slight movement in the crowd just back of the railing. An old woman pushed her way through to a front-row seat which had just been vacated. She wore a long, calico poke-bonnet which she had pulled so low over her face that it was almost impossible to see her features.

She glanced across at Moccasin Foot and, although there had been no signal, Dave was certain that recognition had passed between the two. Something about the hawk-like nose under the bonnet was vaguely familiar to Dave, but a sudden outburst on the part of the State's attorney distracted his attention.

When the jury had retired to decide the case, the room seemed to be surcharged with tense excitement. The sheriff shifted about in his chair, shooting keen glances over the crowd as if to reassure himself that all his aids were present. The Collingames were gathered in a small knot near the gate in the railing and, at the least movement on their part, a hundred eyes were upon them instantaneously. They seemed to be the coolest persons in the room. The shuffling of feet caused the judge to bring his gavel down upon his desk in sudden protest.

When eight or ten of the Farley clan filed in from the hallway and made their way forward to the railing, those who stood between them and the Collingames immediately stepped to one side in order to be out of

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

line of fire. The sheriff pulled his chair around until he was facing both factions and waited.

Dave, who had been sitting beside the State attorney's table, leaned over and picked up the two bullets which had been used as evidence. He toyed with them, rolling them about in the palms of his hands. One of them was bright and shiny on one side and dull on the other. Examining it more closely he discovered that an appreciable amount of the lead had been worn away on the bright side. Then he turned the other bullet over. It was also worn smooth and bright on one side.

Startled at the discovery, he bent over close to the sheriff and gently raised one of the loops of the officer's cartridge belt. Every bullet in the sheriff's belt was worn bright exactly like the two on the table which had been taken from Collingame's body. Dave leaped to his feet.

"Your Honor," he cried loudly in his excitement, "you are trying the wrong man. Moccasin Foot didn't kill Uncle Dan. It was some one else."

The court-room was in instant confusion, and the judge beat vainly on his desk to restore order. A half-dozen men rushed forward impulsively, but halted at the railing when several of the guards stepped forward to meet them. The sheriff was looking at Dave, his face whitening and his hands closing and unclosing convulsively. He had half-arisen from his chair and drops of perspiration stood out on his forehead. Finally order was obtained, and the court turned to Dave.

"Will you repeat what you have just said?"

"I said Moccasin Foot did not kill my uncle." Dave, with a quick effort, controlled himself and spoke in a slow, deliberate tone. "The man who killed Uncle Dan had an old grudge against him, a grudge that was nine years old. It started when my father and Ed Rutherford, the sheriff's brother, were killed."

"Get to the point," ordered the judge. "You must have some proof of your theory."

"Yes, sir! I have proof which I don't think can be questioned." He picked up the .38 special from the table and held it up in view of all. "The man who killed my uncle also had a gun of this caliber. Here's the proof, your Honor."

He opened his hand and pointed to the two exhibit bullets.

"These bullets are worn smooth and shiny on one side. They are leaden bullets, and some of the lead has been rubbed off. Both of them are worn in exactly the same manner. The man who killed Uncle Dan had a cartridge belt that was ripped loose from the loops which carried the cartridges. When he walked the bullets rubbed against the leather." He stopped and pointed his finger at the sheriff.

"That's the man who killed Uncle Dan."

The officer's face went ashy, and for the moment he seemed stunned by the sudden accusation. Then he sprang away from the table and shot rapid glances toward the doors and windows, plainly seeking an avenue of escape. The window back of the jury box was unguarded, and he leaped in that direction. In dodging, one of the lawyers upset the table and then crouched behind what protection it offered.

"Stop him!" shouted Dave. "He'll get away."

His face livid with fear and anger, the sheriff whirled about and dropped one hand in a swift movement to his holster. Dave reached for his own gun, but saw that he would be too late. He straightened and braced his body for the impact of the bullets.

A single shot roared, and Dave thought it strange he didn't feel any pain. Then he found himself staring at the sheriff's face and wondering why a small, blue-ringed hole had appeared in the middle of the flushed forehead. The officer's gun clattered to the floor as he staggered back against the table. He caught at a chair with both hands and clung to it for an instant before sliding silently down beside it.

Dave wheeled toward the crowd, which was milling wildly about the railing. The old woman, with her poke-bonnet pulled still lower over her eyes and her shawl drawn tightly about her shoulders, was making her way toward the door with surprizing agility. Both of her hands were concealed beneath her apron.

In the confusion she reached the exit safely, but as she passed through the portals several men, rushing inside, knocked her bonnet askew. Swiftly she snatched it back in place, but in that instant Dave recognized Raleigh Bill Farley.

Ten seconds later Dave reached the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

window just in time to see the "old woman" swing to the saddle of a waiting horse. Suddenly Dave felt himself thrust aside, and a gaunt form filled the opening. A glance at the white beard was enough for Dave, and he leaped forward in time to strike down the gun-arm of the aged feudist.

"Let him go, grandpa. He made a clean job of it."

Old Bart turned and something like a kindly smile softened his grizzled features.

"You're right, Dave. I must have forgot. It's better this way. I want peace in my old days."

STRANGER THAN FICTION

by Rex George Fuller

SHAMBLING over mesa top and slumping down the slanting trails;
Loafing through the squalid street and hailing friends that pass;
Headed for the Eagle Bar to talk off months of loneliness—
Lyin' Tom McGinnis, and his burro, Sassafras,
Trigger-tongued old desert rat, set shooting by a glass.

* * * * * *

"Kivered lots o' country sence th' last time I was settin' here.
Seen a locoed rabbit run a coyote out o' sight.
Sassafras, he seen a ghost, 'nd tried to git in bed with me;
Wouldn't stop his cryin' till I up 'nd made a light.
Must ha' been an Injun ghost to give him such a fright.

"Shore, he hates an Injun! He can smell 'em like they're water-holes;
Stands 'nd shivers with th' tears a-runnin' down his nose.
Saved my life this very trip, a-sayin', '*Injun!*' thataway—
Caught 'em unexpected like, 'nd laid 'em out in rows.
Reckon lots o' folks gits rich on less 'n Sassy knows.

"Got back in th' mountains 'nd went pannin' round permisc'us-like.
Found a sort o' valley with a spring a-feedin' through.
Never seen such grass before! It like to kivered Sassafras;
Kep' him singin' to hisself th' sweetest songs he knew.
Sassafras a-singin' shore would make a buzzard blue!

"*Stranger Than Fiction*," *copyright, 1923, by Rex George Fuller.*

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"Rabbits runnin' round th' place as thick as bones at Pizen Crick;
Half as tall as Sassafras—and half ag'in as fat.
Trees 'nd flowers everywhere, 'nd birds so plump 'nd innocent
Used to knock 'em kickin' with a wallop of my hat—
No use burnin' powder on a bird as ripe as that.

"Gold was at th' grass-roots, 'nd in nuggets in th' gravel-beds,
Shinin' in the water 'nd a-siftin' down in heaps.
Sorted out a peck or so, jus' takin' what was handiest;
Figgered I could come ag'in 'nd fix myself for keeps.
'Tain't so much th' gold you gits, as what you ups 'nd keeps.

"Ice cave on one side o' me, 'nd boilin' spring right next to it.
Couldn't had it better if I'd made it up myself.
Lots o' feed for Sassafras, 'nd all th' grub that I could eat
Runnin' round as handy-like as any pantry shelf.
Have to go 'nd git it 'fore you find it on the shelf.

"Left account o' rattlesnakes; they got too free 'nd sociable,
Campin' in my blankets like I run a snake hotel.
Killin' one was findin' two, until they kind of organized;
Made that valley look a heap like Drunkard's Day in hell.
We lit out 'nd left 'em flat, 'nd liked it just as well.

"Couldn't find that place ag'in to save my hope o' Kingdom Come.
Dust storm did it; lost my trail 'nd lost my peck o' dirt;
Tied it on to Sassafras 'nd follered, hangin' on his tail
Seven days 'nd nights—'nd then I missed it. Shore! It hurt!
After we found water—shore! I *mourned* that missin' dirt!

"Found a little pay streak, but my grub give out, 'nd here I be,
Soppin' up th' nose-paint 'nd unburdenin' my mind.

* * * * * *

Reckon I might find that place ag'in if I could outfit good.
How'd you like to grub-stake me for half o' what I find?

* * * * * *

'Tain't no matter *losin'* gold. There's always more to find."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

PREPARED

by

PHILIP M. FISHER JR.

MARSH, ex-gentleman, adventurer, beach-comber, and now, by the grace of Satan, cook on the schooner *Jade Queen*, lifted his head as the thrumming of a guitar murmured of human joys and human loves from the town of Balayan across the narrow, gently heaving, stretch of black waters between. His fingers, however, did not relax their grip about the throbbing throat of the human being beneath him. If anything, they tightened.

Black, the town was—as black as the waters themselves, though here and there yellow lights braved the heat-sodden gloom. Only the short pier stood out, cleaner-cut black than all the rest. Above the yellow lights Marsh made out the dim rolling crest of the mountains whose curves enfolded this shallow bay of Southern Luzon. And over all he was conscious of a myriad staring, cold-eyed, diamonds that watched him at his task.

Thus he stared, with the heaving of a tortured body beneath him on the schooner's fore-deck. The thrumming of the guitar hummed across the waters, and he cursed the sweat that trickled down his bare arms to his hands, and thence to the Kanaka boy's neck, making his grip the less secure. This —— heat! Once this thing was done, this last strike, he'd leave the cursed Philippines, and never again set foot out of temperate lands.

"Fake!"

He grunted with elaborate sarcasm, his fingers digging into the throat of the struggling boy.

"Think they're foxy, eh? Came prepared eh? Faugh!"

For a moment Marsh had no time for further reflection. His teeth were white, set, and his own breath hissed through them as the slowly strangling Kanaka jerked and writhed beneath him. He was glad that he had no shoes, that custom on his victim's part, and necessity on his own, forced this lack. Glad, too, that he had chosen the very bows themselves for the job—the furthest point on the schooner from the cabin below. Yet—he grunted in his secure confidence—even had they had shoes on, and he had chosen the very cabin roof:

"Ha! It'd take a —— of a racket to wake them!"

In the darkness his teeth flashed again in an evil grin.

"Prepared, eh? Lying, of course. Putting me off the track, —— them! Think they've kept it secret; and when I catch 'em with it, catch 'em cold, they say it's a fake, and that the other is coming by another boat. Just made negotiations for the real one, eh? Prepared? I'll show 'em who's prepared. I'm no fool."

He paused bitterly. Then added—

"Except in coming to this forsaken —— of stinkin' heat."

The body quivered beneath him—and suddenly was limp.

For a moment his grip held about the throat. Then he lifted himself and softly stepped to the narrow peak of the deck, dragging the body with him. He tripped over the taut bight of anchor chain between

"Prepared," copyright, 1923, by Philip M. Fisher, Jr.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

pelican-hook and the hawse-hole—and swallowed a blasphemy. He felt about in the darkness beyond the chain, and his hands came in contact with a length of manila line, loose-coiled atop a large iron pot. He grinned as his fingers touched the contents of the pot—both the schooner's galley gear and her scrub-deck coral sand had come in handy. The pot was heavy. Oh, he was prepared, all right! The hypocrites!

He tied the line under the limp shoulder, and strained on the knot with one foot against the ribs, making sure that it would hold. Certainty must be his watchword; preparedness, and certainty. No slips with him doing the job. But they, down below there, aft, in the cabin—huh! Fake? Like —— it was a fake!

Making sure that the end of the line was secure in its bail, he softly raised the pot, grinning at the strain, and lifted it over the low bulwarks of the bow. He'd fixed it right! He lowered away until it reached the water a fathom below, peering over the side to make sure. He had carefully judged the length of manila necessary. Feeling along the line behind him, he nodded. The weighted pot touched the water, and the line was taut between it and the Kanaka.

He let go slowly. The sinking pot dragged the body to the side, and it caught in the angle between deck and the rise of the low bulwarks. He gave it a forceful push that carried it well over the side. A slight splash. Peering down again he satisfied himself that nothing was in sight.

He rubbed his hands on his drill trousers.

"That's done," he whispered. "Act One, Scene One. All according to the program I made for 'em up North. Act Two? Huh! Wait 'til I hit Frisco for that. The liars!"

He stepped quickly aft. Before the cabin hatchway he paused a moment and stared once more into the unrelieved shadow of Balayan. The soft throbbing of the guitar still hummed in the night. Only three dots of yellow showed of wakefulness now—one to the right of that short finger of pier, another far down the beach beyond it, and one high on the hill back of the town. Above, the rounded crests of the mountains bit into the glittering sky, black against blue-black. The stars themselves hung lower overhead, bright, intent, absorbed in their calm consideration of a little world.

Marsh sniffed the warm air, rank with the lush vegetation of the night-hidden land. Again the guitar——

"Bah!"

He spat over the side, rubbing sweat from his forehead on the back of his hand, thence on his trousers leg.

"They won't be back 'til they're soused to the gills."

He spat again toward the town.

"Give me Frisco," he said.

He stepped to the low bulwarks and peered outboard, toward the *Jade Queen's* bows. Swayed as the little vessel rolled slowly to an oily heave of the sea. Felt a slight jerk underfoot as the bow came up against the short drift of anchor chain they had let go in the shallow bay. Then, tearing his eyes from the dim bows he had just left:

"*He's* —— well out of the way. Now for Scene Two."

WITH a hand on the side bulkhead he felt his way down toward the cabin. Listened intently a moment to the heavy breathing that came from beyond the door farther forward. Then lighted a match. At the yellow flare of it objects flashed into flickering life.

To his left the galley door, open. He grinned grimly at the space beneath the little stove. The pot had been there; now replaced by a bucket of sand. Over the stove, on a rack of two nails in the bulkhead behind the pipe, the cabin broom—the captain's pride. The fool had fashioned it himself; bamboo handle, thick chocolate-colored brush of cocoa nut fibre-laced with raw hemp. The shadow of the stove pipe moved over it as the flame of the match flared in dying effort.

He lighted another, saying to himself that there was plenty of time, plenty.

"*They* won't wake up. Any more than the goo-goo up there."

He chuckled to himself. They weren't the only ones on the schooner that were prepared, not they. Prepared? Oh, yes—trying to fool him because he had caught them looking at the thing the day they left Tabatand, just after they had bought it from the *datu*. Laughed, too, and were so cursed frank in telling him the whole story: How some rich New Yorker had one of the things and was having the earth scoured for another, for his wife. No good unless he had a pair of them. And the captain knew this shriveled old Moro in the southern isles,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

knew he had one that might match. Had brought this specially made fake, that he might be certain they were alike. How the captain had emphasized this; does a man spend seven thousand dollars in U. S. gold just on a shoestring hunch? Hardly. They must match—the New Yorker must be satisfied.

What a child's tale! What an obvious lie. They had been too open about it, too wide-eyedly open, too friendly. Prepared? They'd soon enough discover that some one else was really prepared. But they——

He pushed open the door to the officers' cabin, and stepped boldly in The breathing was more stertorous here, the whole compartment alive with its labor. The tiny flare of his carelessly scratched match disclosed two men on opposite sides of the small table of greasy *narra*, to Marsh's right. Two heavy enamel-ware coffee cups were at their elbows—one tipped over! A cognac bottle still almost full stood upright, farther away. The faces of the two men were buried in their arms on the table, their white shirted backs rose and fell to deep spasmodic breathing. For a moment Marsh surveyed them, holding his breath.

Then he coughed slightly.

They made no move.

He spoke:

"Captain! Mr. James!"

The shoulders rose and fell.

"It's there still, by ——!"

Marsh stepped to them, and snatched from the table between their two heads a small finger length tube of bamboo, which he instantly hid in his trousers.

He had it! He felt his body atremble, and cursed the match burning his fingers. Started to leave, then after a glance at the sleepers, his eyes fastened on the door in the forward bulkhead, leading to the storeroom. Then he shook his head.

"No. This is enough, —— them! I can hide this."

And he felt his way through the blackness back to the passage way next the galley. Here he paused, twisted the plug from the short bamboo tube he had taken from the table, and pulled from within a small wadded bit of fluffy *kapoc*. His fingers trembled as he separated the matted fiber; and his hand clenched about the stuff as the schooner rolled slightly once more and jerked restlessly at the short anchor chain in the bows.

Then he leaned up against the door opposite the galley, and thrilled to the smooth velvet of the object he had taken from the soft protecting cotton-like *kapoc*.

"Mine! Mine! I'll fake 'em."

He took out the cheap watch he had found while panhandling the rich whites one Sunday on the Luneta up in Manila. Grunted as he recalled that he had not even been able to pawn it. He'd cursed his luck then; but now the thing met its destiny. With a thumb nail he opened the back of it, and into the empty case carefully wadded the thing he had taken from the bamboo tube. Handy; and with no suspicion possible to him, a good enough hiding-place.

Then he entered the galley, lighted another match, swiftly burrowed his hand into the sand in the bucket under the stove; and drew forth a small packet. From this he took two brown pellets of raw opium, dropped them into the still warm coffee in the pot bracketed on the stove, and leaning across the stove, tossed the packet out of the port over the narrow deck into the sea.

Then he took up another cup, dipped it into the coffee, and splashed the brown liquid on the galley deck. This done to his satisfaction he placed the cup itself on its side in a small puddle, and deliberately laid himself down in an awkwardly sprawling heap, with his head outside the door, face buried in an arm.

A BLOW in the side awakened him. He gave forth no sound, made no move other than in the heavy breathing.

"Get up, you drunken scullion!"

The toe of the mate's rubber deck shoe was less hard than the voice that followed. Yet Marsh lay limp. By the red of his eyelids he knew that it was day. They would be hauling up the anchor soon, to get under way for Manila. The other blacks would be back from their night on the beach—the water would be aboard. And the captain and the mate would have lost. The loss was in James' voice right now. Huh!

He heard the mate's padded footfalls returning to the cabin; the little rat!

"Oh, skipper! He's got it, too!"

The captain's voice, softly penetrating in contrast.

"Who's got what?"

"That —— beach-comber we took on up

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

north. Like a rag on the galley deck. Doped, too."

Two pairs of feet approached. He must be doubly careful now. Not a sign. He heard their quick breaths, pictured the tall, clean-shaven, blue-eyed captain bending over him; and steadied his own gulping inhalations.

"Well, I'll be ——!"

A hand seized his shoulder and shook hard.

"Marsh! Marsh!"

The mate's voice:

"Same way, skipper. That cup there—see? 'Twas in the coffee, all right. He probably got the dregs."

Marsh heard a rattle at the stove.

"Yep. There's a couple half-dissolved pills of it still in the pot, captain."

He let himself remain limp as they turned him over. A finger touched his eyelid, and with lightning calculation he rolled back his eyeballs.

"The poor devil got it heavier than we did, mate; you're right. Now I wonder who——"

James' brittle words interrupted.

"He'll die, I reckon. The dirty swab always guzzled more Java than the whole crew together. Serves him ruddy well right."

"Let him lay there, mate. When we get out to sea send a couple Kanaka's down and have him fetched up on deck. Roust 'em on the job now, mate."

He was left alone.

They didn't suspect him. He had prepared well; had followed old Lai Hing's directions as to the opium, too. Just enough of it in their coffee to keep them harmless until he had accomplished his purpose. Not enough to prevent their working the schooner in the morning, but just enough to give him his chance in the night. He smothered a chuckle. That was preparedness to the point of genius. While they—the fools! The cognac they always poured in their evening coffee would effectually kill any odor, any unusual taste. They had helped—helped! Ha!

And all their talk of fake——

Another thought struck him. Funny! They hadn't mentioned that the thing had been stolen. Now why—? Humph! Playing foxy again, of course. Foxy. Hypocrites. Knew it must be on the ship some place and were simply going on as if nothing had happened. And would watch. But let 'em watch. Let 'em spy, —— them! He had played his game from the very beginning. He had planned—as they had said they had planned. He was safe enough. There was only one of the gang they could suspect.

Had they discovered yet that one was missing? And those guitars playing whang-doodles over in the village, the night like the inside of a tar barrel, the whole crew ashore except that single goo-goo he had put over the bows. Safe? Nothing to it!

The mate's bellow came down to him, and shortly the brown crew's heathen sing-song as they hove in the clanking chain. Then a short pause during which he heard James' crackling curses again. Then the clanking of the chain, and the thud on the forecastle as the anchor was catted over the side.

The drumming of many feet on deck. The excited chatter of the crew. The squeal of ill-oiled blocks, blistered dry in this cursed Philippine sun. Marsh could visualize what was going on. And when he heard the slap-slap run of water, and felt the deck beneath him heel gently, then hum with steady life, he knew the *Jade Queen* had the wind neatly bellied in her canvas and was heading out on their last leg to Manila.

Footsteps coming down again. He relaxed, waiting.

The captain's soft voice.

"On deck with him."

He was lifted by the shoulders and knees, and limped himself bag-like in the arms that carried him. He let his head drop back. Quick breaths, flavored with *aguadent'*, fluttered in his face. Goo-goo, of course. Ashore last night. He felt grim humor arise within him; he was acting too well for comfort—that —— goo-goo's gasping——

"Lay him there, by the bul'arks," came the captain's voice, rather crisper now. "Douse him with a bucket of water."

Marsh braced himself, and thought quickly. The captain and the mate had come out of it an hour before. Even had he been given a heavier dose of the stuff, it was logical that a dash of water would by this time have some effect. The drench came, nearly strangling him. He quivered, moved his head slightly. Another bucketful—Marsh groaned, and opened one heavy-lidded eye.

The captain and the squat mate were standing at his feet, regarding him keenly,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

though they still looked somewhat haggard about the eyes and lips. He turned over on his side, suddenly doubling up his knees as though in the extremes of nausea. He had seen such an effect in the dens of Hongkong's West End.

He heard James' dry laugh, fancied the small, bead-black, scornful eyes slightly popped.

"Ha! Pretty good, eh, skipper?"

And the captain's gentler drawl:

"That's right, Marsh. Get rid of it. You'll be on the job in an hour or two. Must have eaten something that poisoned you, that's all."

Marsh, continuing his play of desperate illness, made no answer. But his thoughts were running rapidly.

So they really were not going to let on that they themselves had been doped. Not half bad; he'd have to give them credit for that. They could play a pretty good game themselves. Hah! But so could he; and he'd beaten them out.

"Let him lie there, mate. He'll be on his feet in a short while."

James' brittle voice snapped—

"'F I had my way, skipper, I'd chuck him to the sharks."

There was a short pause; then the captain spoke again.

"Give him a chance, mate. Lots of the poor ——s never had one."

"Nor deserved any—ungrateful, beach-combin' skunks!" crackled the mate.

For an hour or more Marsh lay on the deck. Now and again one of the crew would come and dash a bucket of sea water upon his head, and he let himself mutter a snarling curse each time. Then the sun became so hot for him that he felt it must be time to move. He dragged himself over to the cabin rise, and sat up with his back against it.

He noticed that the Kanakas gave him plenty of deck space, and grunted to himself that it was well they did. They knew how he felt. Superstitious lot, too. Probably thought there were devils in him, or something. The way they glanced at him, showing the whites of their eyes.

He slapped the deck with one hand.

"Water! A drink of fresh water, boys."

Two or three of them gathered in a little knot, whispering, shrugging their shoulders, rolling their eyes now and again at him.

"*Water*, —— you!"

One of them hurried aft, and returned with a bucket which he put down some six feet away. With a curse Marsh crawled to it, and lukewarm though the water was, gulped it greedily, for he had heard somewhere that thirst was a symptom of his poisoning. Then he crawled once more to the side of the schooner and hung his head over the low bulwarks with a groan.

The *Jade Queen* had already beaten past the southern headland of Balayan Bay, and was now on a northwesterly course that soon would bring her on the last heading toward Manila. Once past the point up there, Corregidor would flit by quickly, and but a few short hours would see them moored alongside the stone-walled embankment of the Pasig. He would thank the captain for the run south; the billet that had kept him, he would say, from possible starvation between remittance checks. Then he would bid him good-by, and depart. Later, San Francisco—and a couple years at least of luxury. After that he didn't care.

He had planned it well. And that foxy pair, captain and mate, were lying low, too. The mate had called him an ungrateful skunk, yes. But that meant nothing; James had been against his coming aboard in the first case. But the captain—baby-eyed fool—had given in to his pleading. Marsh wondered if he would say anything about the loss even when they arrived in Manila.

He crawled back to the cabin, and again lifted himself against it. He was hungry, but dared not eat. He'd make up for that, though.

He wondered about the Kanaka boy he had put over the bows the night before. Nobody had mentioned that the goo-goo was missing. Had the Captain and James told the crew some story about that goo-goo—all part of their game of covering the real issue? Marsh cast his eyes down the deck. The head of the helmsman just appeared over the hatchway break in the after end of the cabin, and he caught the Kanaka's eyes rolling from him as he turned. —— these goo-goos! Infernal lot; with their eying, and their superstitions, and their mysterious thoughts and chatter. Monkeys!

Hours passed thus. And Marsh, with the patience of a man who has done well and can afford to wait, sat on the deck with his back against the cabin. The tropic sun beat down upon him, and he sat in a pool of sweat. But the bucket was still beside him,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

and lukewarm though it was, he drank of the water copiously; and with a handful of it now and again wet his hair. He cursed the heat in grim, unspoken anathema; but like a man exhausted, he limply held position and place.

Twice the captain passed him, bending his lean frame slightly to peer down with his washed-blue eyes; and each time dropping a word of sympathy and encouragement. And the mate paused before him just before the sun reached meridian, and stared at him with his haggard eyes of snapping jet.

"When the —— 're you gettin' on the galley job? Snap out o' yer hop, scullion!"

He had returned the glare with a weakly reproachful look, and with a muttered curse the mate had passed on.

In the middle of the afternoon he dragged himself up, and found he really had to steady himself now, with a hand on the grip rail of the cabin, as he felt his way down to the hatch. Gradually he let his strength visibly return. He cleaned up the galley, and took the broom the captain—fool!—had made on the run south to Tabatang, down from its nails behind the stove. Entered the cabin, and started the daily clean-up.

The captain was lying on the narrow transom starboard side of the swinging table, reading a book. He looked up as Marsh entered.

"Come over here a moment, Marsh. There's something I want to tell you."

FOR a moment Marsh felt a sudden sense of calamity. Then his logic again came to his aid.

"Yes, captain."

Under the captain's speculative eyes, Marsh laid the broom against the bulkhead and stood, somewhat bent, with a hand resting upon the table. What now? Nothing, at any rate, that could harm him. Yet, though he must still simulate signs of recent physical distress, he must now keep doubly on the alert.

The captain got to his feet, and going to the locker brought forth a bottle of cognac and two glasses.

"This is something of a compact, Marsh. Mr. James knows the situation, and as you're the only other white man 'board ship I've convinced him that you ought to know, too. Possibly you can help."

Marsh, hardly restraining himself from snatching at the bottle, steadied himself against the table.

"Yes, sir. I'll be glad to, captain."

The captain filled the glasses, raised his own with a nod to Marsh to drink, and swallowed the liquor.

"There's something happened down there off Balayan, Marsh. You were not the only one of us to be drugged, you know."

Marshed started.

"Drugged, sir! Why I thought—you said something I ate—something——"

"I did. But we were drugged, Marsh, all three of us. Mr. James and I came out of it just before we found you there on the galley deck. Been pretty sick too, but trying to keep if from the crew. Now here's the point of the whole thing, Marsh. You brought us coffee, remember?"

Marsh nodded, wide-eyed. Did he suspect? Must be careful now. Must not overdo the thing. The captain, his mild blue eyes still darkly pouched on Marsh's, went on.

"We had been examining that black pearl, the fake one they sent from New York you know, for some one out here to match. That coffee knocked us so fast that we——"

Inwardly Marsh smiled. Still talking "fake," eh? Well, let 'em. Let them play out their own game. His was played—and won. Yet he started forward, his face lighted with an outraged glare.

"It was in that coffee, then! I—it did taste— Well, I'll be ——."

The captain nodded at the interruption and went on.

"It was in that coffee, yes, Marsh. And when we came to this morning, the pearl was gone."

"*Gone!*"

Astonished comprehension was stamped in Marsh's countenance.

"They drugged us so that——"

He broke off abruptly, fearing too much surprize. Then, with his hand groping at the table, and swaying slightly—

"But who——?"

His eyes were wide open on the captain's. He paused with a fallen jaw.

"We have only one clue, Marsh. The Kanaka lad we kept on board for watch last night is gone, too."

"Good Lord!"

The captain filled the glasses, nodding his invitation again.

"Now, what we want you to do is this;

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

go topside again, and play you're still sick. It seems dead certain that the missing Kanak' took that pearl, thinking it was genuine. The others may know something about it. Understand? Open ears, even if your eyes are still groggy. The fake is worth a hundred dollars itself, and I don't want to lose even that much.

"Pick up what dope you can; most of the boys chatter in some kind of pidgin and you've been in these parts long enough to get it. If you find the pearl, Marsh, there's twenty-five dollars gold in it for you. That ought to keep you from the beach until the next check comes in, man."

Marsh let his fists slowly close. His body became tense. His voice rang with indignation:

"If I could find the man who doped us, captain— But say—look here! That missing fellow—he was the only one aboard down there besides us. By Heaven, captain, turn back!"

The captain shook his head, and smiled.

"I purposely gave the crew a holiday in Balayan, Marsh. We wanted to use that much time. The schooner with the real pearl was to follow at our heels, with the old *dato* himself on board coming up to collect the money. As it is we'll tie up in the Pasig but a few hours before it, in time to make arrangements with the bank, you know. On the job now, Marsh. Keep an open ear."

Marsh started away, his heart beating with the excitement over certain fortune. The captain's gentle drawl stopped him.

"Just leave my broom on the table there, Marsh. I'll titivate the cabin up a bit myself."

Marsh responded with a grin. He could afford that now.

"Aye, aye, sir."

With a half-salute, trembling-armed, he left the cabin.

It was with high elation that he crawled out on deck, and dragged himself wearily up to the bows. Seven thousand dollars! in San Francisco, ten at least. Two years he could have—not strenuously extravagant, to be sure, but two good years. The States were dry, of course, but he could find ways and means; five thousand a year, over four hundred a month! He could enjoy himself. Could keep his eyes open, too, for anything easy that might turn up. A little careful forethought, a bit of simple planning—it was so —— easy.

And the captain, that simple old fool with his kid's eyes, still trying to fuddle him. A fake black pearl worth a hundred dollars! Hah! Did they think *him* a fool? When one is buying a pearl worth seven thousand dollars gold in the Islands, does he worry over much about a hundred dollar fake? Would he put himself out for it at all?

Setting him out to watch! The humor of it. Lordy! How could grown men become such utter jackasses! Yes, they had come prepared, certainly they had come prepared. Everything planned for the emergency, eh? As they had told him when he had come upon them examining the thing, down south in Tabatang, just after having returned to the schooner after the interview with the old Moro. A specially made fake, for the purpose of matching a lone black pearl some get-rich-quick New Yorker had so he could have ear-rings for his fat wife. Humph! This was good.

And now he was spying on the crew by special order. Must keep his ears open. Well—he'd hear just exactly—nothing. Play safe. Best not to make up a tell-tale lie about something he had heard. Delays were not entirely good. Best to play it safe and clean.

As he had done last night, for instance.

He grinned grimly to himself, and the slight dizziness the liquor had given him felt good. His mood became jubilant, though quietly so. Yep; as he had done last night. Right here, too, in the very bows of the *Jade Queen*. Where his head rested he had placed the iron pot—he could feel the grit under his scalp now of the sand that had sifted to the deck over the pot's rounded lip.

And right there near the hawse hole, where the bight of chain now looped over the bulwarks, the goo-goo had caught, held in the angle by the weight of the pot that was to anchor him to the bottom for all time. Some love-sick ass ashore was playing the guitar, too, and to the tune of it he had heaved the goo-goo into the sea. *Kerplunk!* And he was gone. And the game that he, Marsh, was playing, was neatly sewed in the bag; just as the pearl itself was neatly hidden in his empty watch case.

Tomorrow morning they would make Manila, and with their kicker chugging below, run the short distance up the Pasig to their mooring-place near Magellanes Landing.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Lord, wouldn't another drink feel good on his empty belly! Later—later——

But now he must be sick, weak, exhausted—and the captain had ordered him to watch.

The lush green of Luzon, hazing to deep, dull blue as the mountains shouldered inland, was on their starboard hand, as Balayan had been the night before—only then in concealing darkness. The sea was a tumultuous bed of diamond-crystalled amethyst about them, and the spray dashing over the bows was clean and good—killed some of the cursed heat, thank Heaven! The canvas was white, and the round of the sails told of the steady breeze. Tomorrow——

THE deck throbbed to the chugging of the engine. The canvas was down, and of the Kanakas, two were securing the sail covers. The other three were standing by, starboard side, ready to pass mooring lines ashore. The sixth, Marsh reflected with a shrug, was moored past all sailing beneath the waters of Balayan Bay.

He glanced at the muddy flow of the Pasig, the slowly circling lily pads drifting down its turbid stream. He smiled upon them—jubilant again, and only frowned slightly at the river's current. If it had not been for the push of the river they would already be tied up, and he ashore—but what now was a minute or two! Once on the beach he knew enough of the underworld of the Chinese quarter over Pin-Pin way to be secure. He'd bought the opium from oily old Lai Hing—and old Lai Hing would hide him for three months if need be; until, at any rate, the answer to a letter he would write could come from Frisco. That letter, on his promise, would bring passage money for the trip back to the States. And then——

Dreams of the two years to come.

The captain was at the wheel, his blue eyes steady ahead. The mate, Marsh knew, was down at the engine, ready to kick out the clutch at the captain's shout. He had seen him take down that broom of the captain's, probably to brush off grease accumulated from long disuse. Marsh chuckled to himself. It had been so easy. A moment and that goo-goo ashore would catch the heaving line; and in two minutes he himself would step up to the captain, hold out his hand, thank him, and say good-by. With the hope, of course, that the lost pearl would turn up.

Seven thousand dollars, ten in Frisco—he knew where he could sell it; leave that to him. Preparedness was his watchword. The time he'd have. The liquor. The women——

The captain shouted. The brown boy in the bows shot a swift looping line ashore. The *Jade Queen* warped up against the camel fenders rising and falling with the swirl of waters against the stone embankment, and in a moment more was moored bow and stern.

Grime-smudged and streaked with sweat the mate appeared on deck, wiping his hand on a bit of oily waste, and carrying under his arm the captain's broom, the brush black grimed, too.

The captain locked the wheel, and came forward. Marsh, smiling confidently, approached him with outstretched hand.

"Captain," he said genially. "I'm thanking you. You've kept me alive between checks from home, and I'm grateful. And I want to say that I'm —— sorry about the pearl. If I get any dope on it ashore I'll send you word."

The captain's baby-blue eyes looked into his.

"Sorry you had the hard luck of sharing our discomfort, Marsh. We're all lucky to be alive after the knock-out stuff we had."

Marsh waved his hand. The world was his; they were safe now, and all horizons were rainbow hued. What was a minute! He could waste another word. These fools! Too easy.

"If I could find the goo-goo that did that!"

He clamped his jaws over the words.

"Good-by, sir. And good-by, Mr. James. I've had a good time."

"Good-by, Marsh."

He turned away, his heart pounding with the excitement of final success. He had won! Fools that they were—children!

"Mr. Marsh!"

The words came softly from the captain, he knew. But something new in the gentle tone—for a moment the impulse to run almost had him. But logic came again to his rescue. Nothing could be wrong now. With a smile of polite inquiry he turned about. And the smile froze on his lips.

The captain, and the mate were close behind him, regarding him strangely. The

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

mate leaned carelessly upon the broom he had brought from below. And the captain held in his hand a thing the sight of which staggered Marsh as might a horrid blow—a heavy navy automatic forty-five.

He blinked, a slow flush creeping over his face. Then he harshly laughed.

"What's the joke, gentlemen? Shall I put my hands in the air?"

The Captain smiled.

"So you've had a good time, Marsh, have you? Everything worked just fine, eh? You drugged us, stole the fake pearl, murdered one of our crew—and just naturally had a good time. Think you can get away with that, Marsh. Eh?"

Marsh felt the blood drain from his face. For the fraction of a second his wits deserted him. He blustered.

"I—I—steal a fake pearl—murder——"

The gun in the Captain's hand raised slightly. The mildly inquiring blue eyes did not leave Marsh's.

"Come now, Marsh. Why not be a man at the last? Of course you murdered that boy. Who else did?"

A bluff! Marsh's control came back on the instant. The world had been tumbling about him—but what could they know?

"Who else? Why you fools!" he cried. "The —— goo-goo who drugged us and swam to the beach with——"

The mate broke into a harsh, sardonic, cackle of laughter. The captain's soft drawl interrupted.

"Swam away, Marsh? How could he swim away, my friend, when you'd sunk him to the bottom with that iron pot? You see, Marsh, 'the best of plans'—remember the saying?"

"It's a lie—a——"

The mate's brittle voice snapped in interruption.

"Your line fouled the chain, you fool! He come up when we hove the anchor."

The furies of hell tore at Marsh's brain then. In a flash he recalled that he had lowered the weighted pot over the very bows of the schooner, and had given the body itself an extra heave to get it over the side. The one must have gone down the after side of the chain, the other upon the forward; and secured to each other by the line, they had slid beneath the water until afoul. By the devilish calculation of Fate his plans had miscarried. He was lost. With a rush of last despair he heard the captain again demand the pearl.

By ——, the rope might be about his own neck, but they'd never get that pearl! Fake, eh? And demanding it now at the point of a gun!

"The —— I will!" he screamed. "There's your cursed pearl."

And he ripped the watch from his pocket and hurled it out into the muddy stream.

His heart almost stopped beating as the captain and the mate threw back their heads in a burst of laughter.

"So you still don't believe us, Marsh? Really thought we were entirely fools? Well. Show him, mate. Perhaps he'll believe us then."

The mate took the broom from under his arm, and with a dextrous twist slipped off a small section of the bamboo handle. From the hollow within he pulled out a bit of fluffy *kapoc*, and from this, as the captain raised his gun, he extricated something round, glistening, blackly opalescent—holding it to the white sun so that Marsh might see.

"Yes, Marsh," came the Captain's drawl again. "You drugged, you stole, and you murdered—and you'll be hanged by the neck until dead, dead, dead—when all the time this little pet broom of mine, with the *real* pearl, hung behind your galley stove. And the fake was really a fake, you see? Oh yes, Marsh, I think we were prepared."

MARSH still sweats in labor under the tropic Philippine sun—and will for the rest of his days.

The pearl is in the left ear of the New Yorker's wife.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SOME ADVENTURES OF JEDEDIAH SMITH

by FREDERICK R. BECHDOLT

Author of "Cassidy and the Wild Bunch," "The Wanderings of James Pattie," etc.

THE story begins at the edge of the Wasatch Mountains where a cañon widens giving a vista down a long valley to the gleaming waters of the Great Salt Lake. Near by a narrow river rippled shallow over gravel bars. A stretch of grassy meadow flanked its either bank, surrounded by the forest. Within the circle of the wide-branched trees the smoke of many little fires twined toward the sky. Here on an August afternoon in 1826 four men were seated on a fallen log engrossed in quiet talk.

On the farther side of the stream more than a hundred conical skin teepees were scattered about the flat. Blanketed squaws with patches of vermilion on their dusky cheeks toiled among them, bearing burdens of firewood, carrying water in grass baskets to the stew pots, scraping fresh deerskins on the drying-frames. Beady-eyed children ran about underfoot, shrieking at their play. Sharp-nosed dogs yipped defiance at one another. Lean-limbed braves stalked by in beaded moccasins, in leggings fringed with brightly colored quills and hunting shirts decked out with gaudy trappings which told the stories of the wearers' prowess in the grim old game of war.

They lounged on outspread buffalo-robes before their lodges, bargaining with one another for new horses or new wives and smoking pipes with bowls of stone and long reed stems. They squatted in circles, chanting barbaric gambling songs, passing bits of polished bone from hand to hand. Beyond the fringes of the village the white-eyed pinto ponies grazed their fill.

Along the river's nearer bank the ruder shelters of the white men stood; lean-tos of boughs, shades of soiled tarpaulin; and here and there a teepee. In the center of this portion of the dual encampment the four men were sitting before a canvas fly. About them were long piles of beaver-skins, tied up in bales with the flesh side outward; a row of pack-saddles was ranged near by. Under the canvas shade were many curious flat kegs bound round with hoops of brass.

Over the cooking-fires in this, the white half of the camp, the squaws of half a dozen nations hovered; and coveys of dusky half-breed children scuttled everywhere. The men were weatherstained; Spaniards and Creole French, half-breeds and long-limbed Americans from the Virginia and Kentucky mountains. Most of them wore the same barbaric garments as the Indians across the creek; and there were some whose seatless buckskin leggings were festooned by brightly dyed scalps. A few had wide rimmed hats, but the bandanna handkerchief was the most frequent headgear, knotted behind after the fashion of a turban.

Their hair hung long, and more than one old-timer had braided his into two tails with strips of red cloth intertwined among the strands and bits of shell after the manner of some tribe with which he had consorted. Here was a group surrounding two long-bearded fellows who were striving to out-lie each other; and here a dozen sunburned marksmen were testing their skill with the long-barreled flint-locked rifles—a round of whisky for the low man's penalty

So they rested at the cañon mouth on that

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

August afternoon of 1826; red men and white. There were free trappers from the upper Yellowstone and the sage-brush plains beside the Snake; shaggy-browed old-timers whose tangled locks were turning gray, with deep-set eyes which never lost the habit of peering as into remote distances; green "pork eaters" on their first season of apprenticeship; and mingling with the others who had been their one-time rivals, a score of half-breeds and Scotch Canadians, deserters from the Hudson's Bay Company. But the bulk of the crowd were employes of General William Ashley who had been trapping on a hundred streams throughout the Rocky Mountain country, exploring new stretches of the wilderness and fighting hostile Indians for wages.

This was their Summer rendezvous. Word had gone forth at last year's gathering to assemble at the cañon mouth near the upper end of the Great Salt Lake. When the Spring trapping was done and the warm weather made the coats of the beaver unfit for sale they had come drifting hither across the untracked sage-brush plateaus and over lofty passes where the snow hung deep under the June sun.

And while they came in twos and threes and groups that grew at every river fork, a pack-train of a hundred mules was winding its way from St. Louis up the Missouri to the Platte's mouth, across the prairies and on into the west along the Platte's north fork; over brown plains and past strangely carved buttes of sandstone; on up the Sweetwater until the gently tilted table-lands began to slope more sharply toward the packed drifts of South Pass; then down among Green River's weirdly banded castellated buttes, to round the northern end of the Wasatch wall and cross another summit to this valley.

So they met, trappers and Indians and packers with the wares from the distant city. There followed long days of bartering and wage paying; the gunpowder, gewgaws and scarlet cloth went forth among the lodges of the red men; the trappers got their dollars or their credit; and the beaverskins from a hundred streams came to their places on the long pile by the canvas fly. Then the flat wooden kegs, which had been smuggled past the officials at Council Bluffs, were taken from the *aperajoes* and broached; the whisky went on sale.

There came days of frolic and carousal; days when some men fought and some renewed old friendships and some sought new loves among the lodges of the Indians. There were long evenings with the whisky going round and the camp-fire liars in their glory. Now all of this was over; the last fight had been fought and the last song sung; the dollars that had gone forth from under the canvas fly were back again and the credit on the books wiped out to the last item.

All were restless for the long, hard journeys to the beaver-streams, eager for the word as to next Summer's rendezvous. And the four men were sitting on the fallen log perfecting the plans upon which the place of that meeting would depend.

Now and again a runner would go from the group to seek a man in some other portion of the camp. Sometimes the summons took him among the peaked lodges across the creek and he came back with a silent chief of the Shoshones gliding at his heels. More often he looked among the white men, and then the trappers saw one who had gained prestige in their bold calling, passing to conference with the leaders. Once it was grizzled old Hugh Glass; and as he passed some told their rawer fellows how he got that limp when a she grizzly clawed his thigh bare to the bone back in the Black Hills country; how two companions thought him dying and deserted him; and how he crawled on his hands and knees one hundred miles to Fort Kiowa on the upper Missouri, living on berries and fighting with the gray wolves for their meat.

Again it was Thomas Fitzpatrick who had led the first party across South Pass; and that elder man with whom he stopped to say a word or two, was Etienne Provost; only last year he had escaped from the fierce Utes, the sole survivor of twenty men in a massacre one hundred miles south of this cañon. This young mulatto was James Beckwith, who had already fought in half a dozen battles against the Indians and was in his day to become a great Crow chieftan. That other boy, just turned twenty, was Jim Bridger, who had wintered with a party in Bear Valley two years before and discovered the Great Salt Lake.

One after another they went to the four men, to name strange rivers and repeat tales which they had heard from the Indians of unknown tribes, of deserts beyond the southwestern skyline; or squatted on one

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

knee before the group, to scratch rude tracings on the bare earth with a bit of stick. When they were done they would come back among their fellows and the news would spread that great things were being planned for the next season.

That was the truth. Large hopes were growing here; these four men were seeing visions of conquest and a rich empire.

General William Ashley sat in the middle of the group. He was nearing his fiftieth year this Summer, and after six seasons of risking his money and credit in the Rocky Mountain fur-trade, he found himself a rich man. The trapper bands in his employ had worked since 1820 along the upper Missouri and the Yellowstone. West of the Rockies lay an unknown wilderness, the country of the great Hudson's Bay Company. Since they had driven John Jacob Astor's men back over the Continental Divide the British traders had held the country and all its wealth of furs.

But in the Summer of 1824 Thomas Fitzpatrick and Jedediah Smith, two of Ashley's young employes, had gone on a free trapping expedition, and crossed South Pass to streams where the beaver were so thick one could knock them over with a club. A few months later Smith had taken six men onward to the upper Snake River, where he had run across a band of Iroquois Indians in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had been set afoot by the Blackfeet; and he had got all their furs—worth a small fortune—as pay for convoying them to Alexander Ross, the company's nearest partisan.

Within a year, Fitzpatrick had penetrated the Bear River Valley; here he had met a score of Hudson's Bay trappers. These he had induced to desert and to sell to him a great cache of furs which were to have gone to Peter Skeen Ogden, one of the British corporation's head men.

So, in one brief year, Ashley's men had invaded the empire of the Hudson's Bay Company, exploring many of the streams along the western slope of the Rockies from what is now southern Utah to the Canadian line. By their catches and by those two coups which Smith and Fitzpatrick had made, Ashley had paid off his debts and was rich for life. This Summer he had sold out his interests to the three men who were sitting beside him on the fallen log.

David Jackson, William Sublette and Jedediah Smith; not one had reached thirty but all were old in the hard ways of the wilderness. Here on this Summer's afternoon they were rounding out the plans for the first year's operations of their new firm. The country east of the Rockies had a minor part in their projects now; they looked toward the west. Jackson and Sublette would lead their bands through the Salt Lake region and the northern country about the three Tetons, working the streams and winning the Indians along the upper Snake away from the Hudson's Bay traders. That was all settled.

Now Jedediah Smith began to map out his part of the year's work. Sparely built, clean-shaven, with lank black hair; he had just turned his twenty-seventh year. He spoke but little as a rule and among the rough and ready sons of the wilderness his speech was the more remarkable because he never used an oath. There was more than one trapper in that camp who had seen him on his knees in prayer.

His plans reached far. Two years ago, after getting those furs away from the British rivals, he had wintered at Flathead house, in what is now Saunders County, Montana. There he had talked with partisans and trappers of the Hudson's Bay Company, and had heard of California. In that great country of the Mexicans there were good seaports, and behind the mountains long rich valleys. His idea was to take a band of men to California, to trap its streams and later on to establish a salt-water market rivaling the port which the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

British held on the Columbia River.

The scheme was the more daring in that none of them knew aught of that western coast, save that it lay in the direction of the setting sun. But they had heard that the Green River, which the Indians called the Sess kee dee—meaning the Prairie Hen—turned from its southern course somewhere to flow into the west. So Smith purposed to take his men southward past Utah Lake where Ashley had built a trading-post last year, to strike off to the stream which we now call the Sevier, and follow it toward its source; thence to cross the mountains and reach the Sess kee dee, beyond the latter's bend. From that point on there was not even legend of the Indians to guide him. He must feel his way and take what the wilderness might choose to give him. But he believed that the river would lead him to the western sea.

There was the idea. And now the three went over the last details; supplies and traps; horses and men. When they had finished they sent for a runner, and the word was spread that in July next year the trappers and the three members of the firm would meet at this same place.

That night General Ashley made a speech, thanking the men of the mountains for the loyalty they had shown to him. The next morning he set forth with the pack-train and its load of beaverskins for his St. Louis home. The Indians struck their teepees and departed for the country to the north. William Sublette and David Jackson took away their bands. The free trappers scattered in pairs to seek the far-off beaver-streams. And Jedediah Smith started into the southward with fifty animals and fourteen men.

The smoke died and the ashes of the camp-fires grew cold on the meadowland beside the river. The place resumed its silence and the wilderness stole back again smoothing away the signs of men, to abide untroubled for another twelvemonth.

THE pack-train wound its way down the widening valley and reached the plain. It lined out heading south. To the left the Wasatch mountains rose like an enormous wall; to the right the long flats reached away to the pallid waters of the Great Salt Lake. On that expanse between the scarred range and the inland sea the men and horses showed as a thin line, with here and there an outflung speck.

The laden mules came in single file; the faint jingle of metal and the creak of rubbing leather mingled with the thudding of hoofs; dust rose about them and the sweat began to streak their limbs. One or two horsemen followed, vague shapes behind the haze of powdered alkali; others showed at intervals well out on either side, lean forms in buckskin with the long-barreled rifles across the forks of the rawhide saddles. The most of the riders went ahead, strung out behind two leaders who kept side by side far in their van. A seasoned company of mountain men, lank-haired and weather-stained; old-timers whose beards were shot with gray, sunburned young rovers jesting as they rode; French Canadians with sashes round their waists, lean Kentucky mountaineers, half-breeds and a Negro from down Natchez way. While the morning was young there passed among them laughter and rough talk; good-natured epithets, stories of drunkenness and tales of rude amours.

Before them all, keeping well in the lead to shape their course, rode Jedediah Smith with his lieutenant Harrison Rogers beside him. At times a burst of laughter or an oath drifted across the space between them and their followers. They did not heed; their eyes were searching the landscape ahead. Now and again one of them spoke a word as to the direction or distance or some landmark, and that was all. They were a silent pair by nature, this lean, dark-eyed young leader and his middle-aged surbordinate; the one a descendant of the Mayflower Puritans and the other from Scotch Calvinistic stock; fervent believers in their God, shrewd dealers with their fellow men. The morning came on hot. They shaped their course along the flat lands to the south. The train strung out behind them, and the sound of voices dwindled with the rising heat.

So they went on that day and other days. They passed Utah Lake and found the Sevier River beyond a plateau in the west. They traveled up the valley where the sage-brush grew sometimes as high as trees. They found antelope and mountain sheep along the ridges; and when other game was scarce they lived on jack-rabbits. The grass was strong; the stock did well.

Now as they neared the Sevier's head-waters they came into a higher country

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

where the nights were cool, and in the early mornings the touch of frost was in the air. They dallied here to trap. The men went out in pairs and worked the creeks. Beaver were thick. The camp-keepers were busy skinning them, drying the pelts on frames. In the evenings they roasted the fat tails over the coals; they all lived well these days. They found a village of the San Pete Indians who told them of another river beyond these highlands flowing toward the south.

They climbed to wide bluffs and made their way through groves of twisted junipers; then on and up among the taller mountains where the pines grew and there was ice at daybreak along the edges of the dwindling creeks. The grass was poorer and harder traveling was gaunting the pack-animals. They crossed a pass and as they came on down-hill Autumn changed to Summer once again. Here on the upper reaches of the river which Smith afterward named the Virgin, in the land which the Mormons now call Dixie, they got their first taste of the desert.

They followed the valley southwestward. To their left sharp-pointed mountains rose and to their right the scouts saw long glaring flats reaching away among scattered buttes whose naked sides were scorched by prehistoric fires. The waters of the stream were warm and bitter from alkali; the earth along its banks was dry as powder. Cactus and Spanish bayonet grew among the rocks. There was no feed. The horses and the mules became like skeletons. Now and again one died from weakness. The game vanished. They began to kill their starving animals and ate the stringy meat that they might live.

As they went on the country grew more rugged. Some of the men were set afoot. Their moccasins wore out and the rock fragments cut their feet. On the tenth day they reached the Virgin's mouth and saw before them a wide flood as red as blood boiling and whirling in sullen confusion toward the west. And, though the stream which he had seen back in the mountains of northern Utah was a clear as crystal, Smith knew that he had reached the Ses kee dee, which we now call the Colorado.

Here, just beyond the mouth of the mighty gorge whose vermilion cliffs lure sightseers from all parts of the world, they crossed the river. They struck out along its southern bank. The mountains to their left sometimes came so close that they were obliged to travel along their ragged flanks. The land was dry; sharp fragments of fire-scorched rock were strewn all about. They slew more horses; but there was no strength in the meat. The faces of the men grew lean and pinched; their eyes were large; they staggered and there were stretches where you could have trailed them by the blood they left on the hot rocks. Four days of this; and then the mountains drew away; they came into a wide valley where tules and thick brush grew along the river bottom. Before them they saw the sharp peaks which we call the Needles, and here, close at hand, was a village of reed lodges surrounded by patches of corn with yellow pumpkins and melons growing among the brown stalks.

So they found the Mojave Indians within sight of the spot where the Santa Fé railroad crosses the Colorado today; and they rested here for two weeks. The men filled their lean bellies and patched their tattered buck-skin garments. The two leaders held a council with the chiefs of the village who told them that if they were to go toward the setting sun they would come to settlements beside the sea. But between the river and those lands they said were many days of weary travel across a wilderness more savage than any they had yet seen, a country where one would go on for miles and miles without seeing a drop of water.

Smith bought new horses from the Indians to replace the animals which had died. He hired two guides. And on the morning of the fifteenth day after their arrival the company were ferried by the natives across the Colorado on tule rafts. Then they set forth once more.

In after years men came along that route which they discovered from the Colorado to the sea; and when the pack-trains from Santa Fé had marked the trail by the skeletons of dead animals and the graves of those who perished from thirst, the covered wagons followed. The decades passed and the railroad builders chose this pathway, which the old-timers called The Spanish Trail. And so today we travel across the Mojave desert in Pullmans and get swift glimpses of the land whose savage beauty still remains untarnished by the touch of man.

Through that fierce land of vanished lakes and mountains whose living rock, uncloaked

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

by any soil, lies baking in the sun, they worked their painful way. They passed among stucco hills, all gullied by forgotten cloud-bursts out on the long flats, floored with rock salt and borax, white as snow. The sun glare was a torture to their reddened eyes; the mirage unfolded before them until they grew weary of the mockery of spectral waters. The gaunted horses were weaving from weakness. They climbed through sands as fine as powder to the regions of the dead volcanoes. Black lava hills stood out against the blazing sky and cones of cinders rose about their path.

Sometimes they found a cistern in the rock where lukewarm water gave them surcease from their burning thirst; now they came to a place where a river emerged from the hot earth for a brief stretch, then burrowed underground again. Between times there were long days when the pack-animals dropped in their tracks and the tongues of the men were swollen for lack of drink. The land rose before them and they passed between ash-colored hills where nothing grew save the creosote bushes and dry sapless weeds, to great plateaux.

The nights were cold here; the wind blew endlessly carrying thick clouds of fine sand like snow that drifts before a prairie blizzard. Forests of grotesque yuccas grew all about; weird things, half-trees, half-cacti, whose branches were outflung in attitudes of torture.

They saw the mountains looming before them with their snow peaks. They toiled on into the Sierra Madre and crossed the range, where the railroad now finds its way, by the Cajon Pass. They went down the stone-strewn ravine among the cactus and Spanish bayonet, until the level reaches of the San Gabriel Valley opened out ahead of them.

Late in November, more than three months after they had left the Great Salt Lake, they came, weary and ragged and footsore, to the bastioned walls of the Mission San Gabriel.

Here on the sunny valley flats the great church stood, and the adobe outbuilding, making a wide quadrangle. Orchards and vineyards and fields of grain grew all about. Franciscan *padres* were ever passing to and fro with their brown robes kilted up about their bare legs; and bands of dark-skinned Indians toiled through the long days, plowing the rich land, tending the ditches where the water came down from the mountain wall which loomed behind like a great back-drop. Out in the tawny foothills the herdsmen rode, watching the cattle. At regular intervals the mellow music of the Mission bells floated on the drowsy sunlight; and rows of monks passed to their devotions through the cloistered arches of the quadrangle. It was a pleasant land, a place of beauty. In after years Jedediah Smith told men that it was the loveliest country he had ever seen.

So they had reached their goal. And Father Bernardo Sanchez, who was at the head of the mission, received them with fine hospitality. But when the gaunt-eyed trappers had been given quarters and food and when Smith and Rogers, his lieutenant, sat down with the *padres* to dinner and good wine, Father Sanchez reluctantly broke the bad news which he had for them. It was the law, and recent communications from the City of Mexico had laid stress on its enforcement, that no Americans were to come overland into California.

So Smith went to San Diego to make his peace with Governor Encheandia and the others waited long weeks for word to come from him. Harrison Rogers, the lieutenant, dined with Father Sanchez; sometimes he argued over the wine on the old subject of religious doctrine; sometimes he met richly dressed *caballeros*, officials from some presidio or land-holders from some neighboring valley, who had ridden hither on fine blooded horses. Most of the trappers were set to work; they helped get cordwood down from the hills; they toiled at loading hides on vessels in San Pedro harbor. Occasionally a few of them drank too much of the red wine and raised a turmoil in this quiet place.

In the mean time Jedediah Smith remained in San Diego trying to gain the good graces of the Mexican governor. Encheandia vacillated between one decision and another; there were days when he was for clapping the black-haired young American into chains and sending him to the City of Mexico; and there were days when he was on the point of giving him the freedom of the country. Several American skippers had their ships in San Diego and San Pedro harbors, and these New England captains paid good hard money for the rawhides which they took away. So they had influence with the authorities.

They pleaded Smith's cause. Perhaps

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

they would have won his point for him, had it not been for a strong anti-American sentiment among the Mexican officials, which was born of dread begotten by two or three filibustering expeditions back in Texas. What with the Yankee skippers on the one side and this hostile feeling on the other the governor finally compromised. He gave Smith permission to leave the country by the way he had come.

So in the month of January, 1827, their leader came back to the trappers at the San Gabriel Mission and told them that they must make ready to depart. They bought new horses in the pueblo of Los Angeles and they set up the valley. When they reached the outlying rancho where San Bernardino now stands, they halted for five days to break the raw animals.

On the morning of the sixth day they lashed on the packs and swung into their saddles. But instead of traveling up the pass which led to the Mojave desert, they turned to their left and went straight toward the north.

For Smith had a new plan. The missions and the Spanish settlements lay between the coast range and the sea. East of the range, so he had heard during those weeks at San Diego, there was a long valley which began one hundred miles or so north of this point, hemmed in still further to the eastward by a lofty Sierra whose crests were white with everlasting snow. Here there would be neither soldiers nor officials to hinder him.

So he led his men on northward until they reached the junction of the coast range and the Sierras and they crossed by the Tehachapi down to the head of the San Joaquin Valley. The rains of Winter had turned its floor a vivid green; now the warmth of the early California Spring brought forth a golden mist of mustard blossoms. They clung to the base of the eastern foot-hills, making their way from stream to stream, trapping for beaver as they went. Occasionally they ran across a band of peaceful Indians; now and again they happened on a company of ragged horsemen, renegades from the flocks of native neophytes over in the Santa Clara Valley, who lived by plundering the *padres'* herds.

Horse-thief or valley native, Smith had one question for all of them. Was there a pass across these snow-capped mountains to the east? For as the Spring grew older and the time for the Summer rendezvous grew nearer, he was becoming anxious to strike out for the Great Salt Lake.

Nor was the anxiety to meet his partners the only motive in this quest. Here was a land of gentle climate and great richness; and the farther north he went the better were the furs. Somewhere up the western coast near the mouth of the river which still bears their name, the Russians held a trading-post where ships could land. If he could find a route across the Sierras to the Great Salt Lake, his dream of establishing the firm beside the Pacific and rivaling the Hudson's Bay Company might blossom into reality.

The month of May was well along; the heat was beginning to turn the grass yellow on the flat lands when he reached the Stanislaus River. Wandering natives had told him that somewhere beyond its headwaters there was a pass among the snow-capped peaks.

According to his reckoning they would be nearing the latitude of the Great Salt Lake. He gave the word; his company climbed eastward along the river's course, through the red hills where the stiff-branched digger pines and the gaudy madronas grew among the live oaks. They came on upward along lofty ridges cloaked with thick forests of sugar and yellow pine, where Spring's first flowers were appearing in meadows of vivid green. The stream lay far beneath them in a gloomy cañon. The ridges mounted toward blanched crests which made a serrated line against the eastern sky.

They reached the first snow patches; the horses floundered in the drifts; there was no more feed. When five of the brutes had starved to death Smith saw the futility of trying to take so large a party farther at this season. He ordered them to turn back; and when they were down where the Stanislaus emerges from the foot-hills to the valley floor, he picked two men. He bade the others wait here until he returned from the Summer rendezvous.

A small party of seasoned hands can often make it where a larger crowd will fail. Smith and his two companions climbed from the oaks and madronas to the sugar-pines and from the sugar-pines on up the long ridges where the lava meets the granite and the spruce and tamarack begin. The drifts grew deeper; they jockeyed for hard

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

footing in the evenings and the early mornings. They lost one horse and then two more. They toiled on toward a notch between the high peaks. At last they crossed the summit somewhere near Sonora Pass and they came down to the long easy slopes which stretch into the eastward near where the little town of Bridgeport now stands. They found good feed. The remaining horses put on flesh and they followed the Walker River for two days or so. Then they struck off into the northwest.

No man had marked a trail for them; they found no Indians, save a few half-naked Diggers who lived on lizards and grasshoppers and hung about the waterholes. These were unable to give them any guidance. But they hung to their course like homing pigeons.

In later years men who traveled by the wagon-route told of the horrors along the Humbolt sink. These three pathfinders never even saw the Humbolt River. They held to a straight line across a barren desert where the soil was like ashes and the sun was a flaming scourge. The sand dragged at their feet; their animals died and they scraped away the few remaining shreds of flesh which clung to the bones for food; the mirage tortured them with its visions of cool lakes. They were glad to eat the lizards and the rats which they found by the water-holes.

So for twenty-three days, and at last they came out from the glaring flats and saw before them the waters of the Great Salt Lake. Dead reckoning, with no man's word to aid them, but they had aimed straight to their goal. They rounded the southern end of the inland sea and reached the western edge of the Wasatch Mountains where they found game and water and knew once more what it was like to feel food in their bellies.

Since they had last seen this place they had discovered two overland routes across the intermountain country to the Pacific.

Now in the month of July, 1827, the trappers came drifting across the mountains and down the valleys to meet at the cañon mouth; Smith talked things over with his partners. The intermountain deserts which he had crossed were barren of furs. But there might be other passes to the northward and rivers reaching eastward toward the Rockies. They resolved that he should take men, horses and supplies; pick up his party and try to scout out another trail by which the firm could reach those valleys and establish itself in the country by the western sea. It was agreed that next year's rendezvous should be held at Pierre's Hole just west of the Three Tetons. Some time during the Summer of 1828 Smith was to make his way back by a northern route, and fall in with William Sublette who would be trapping along the upper Snake.

AUGUST was drawing to an end when Jedediah Smith and nineteen men came down the Colorado's eastern bank on the way back to California and saw the Needles against the sky ahead of them. Luck had been good to them—as luck has a habit of doing before it shows its teeth—and when they reached the Mojave village they were sanguine; only one hard stage between them and the sea. Their leader knew the way; the desert held no terrors for them now.

They bided for a few days among the tulle lodges. The men were all old hands; and two had brought their Indian wives along with them. The natives gathered around them, begging for bits of finery, peering at the women, pointing at them, chattering in their own tongue. They gave no sign of what was in their minds.

Years afterward the truth came out; how Governor Encheandia had sent word to the village that he was holding in chains the two guides who had conducted Smith across the desert; and that the Indians must prevent any more parties of Americans from crossing the Colorado, or suffer ugly consequences.

But neither Smith nor his lieutenant, Thomas Virgin, suspected any wrong while they held counsel with the headmen and gave presents of colored cloth. The Mojaves smiled on their guests; they brought them food; they helped them gather tules and bind them into bundles, making rafts; and all the time they were awaiting their opportunity.

It came on the fourth morning. The rafts were ready. They started ferrying their goods across the murky river.

Smith went to the western bank with the first load. Virgin remained behind to superintend the loading. One cargo went over, and then another. The morning grew older. Now eight men had crossed. Two Mojaves paddled the raft back to the eastern bank. Several of the remaining

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

party came aboard and the natives shoved off. Suddenly these peaceful helpers who were crowded around the group here at the water's edge, turned into bloody butchers.

The monstrous change came without any warning. One moment, silence; and in that moment's passing, a hideous chorus of shrill warwhoops, the sound of heavy blows, the groans of dying men. The air was dark with arrows. The ferrymen leaped overboard and the shafts buzzed in a thick cloud that hid the raft; the cloud cleared away revealing the dead bodies of the passengers.

One man of those on the eastern side escaped. Thomas Virgin happened to be busy at some task or other at a little distance from his companions, when the thing began. He sprang into the river and struck out. An arrow lodged in his shoulder; another pierced his neck. He swam on to the drifting raft and clung to its edge.

The men on the western bank saw him fighting his way across the turgid current; they saw the bobbing heads of half a dozen Mojaves in his wake; and then they went to work with their long barreled rifles; the Indians turned back. Virgin was dragged to shore by his companions, half-dead from loss of blood.

Nine men left out of nineteen. The two squaws had been taken prisoners. There was only one hope for the survivors and that lay in the savage desert. They lashed Virgin on a horse and they pressed on to the west. They traveled day and night; on the evening of the ninth day they came down Cajon Pass to the San Gabriel Valley.

Their food was gone; they had lost most of their horses; the men were staggering with weakness when they reached the mission. Smith turned Virgin over to the *padres*, until his wounds would heal; and struck out at once with the others for the San Joaquin.

Autumn was coming on in the foot-hills. The party on the lower Stanislaus were in a hard way. Game was scarce here and they dared not move, for the authorities at the Mission San José had learned of their presence in the valley soon after their leader's departure last Spring and had sent them orders to leave the country. They were hiding here, waiting for the arrival of fresh forces.

So Smith found them. Instead of bringing them help, he came in almost as bad a way as they were. He bade the others go to the hamlet of Yerba Buena, where San Francisco stands today, and he set off for San Jose, to get fresh horses and recruit his broken company. That was his idea. And he proceeded to explain his predicament to the *padres* at the mission who straightway threw him into jail. Governor Encheandia was in Monterey. Smith managed to get word to him begging an audience. He went to the old Spanish capital, a prisoner. The weeks dragged by. Captain John Rogers Cooper, who was strong with the Mexican authorities, was in the town. This one-time master of the brig *Rover*, who had sailed to the west coast to trade for hides, consulted with other American skippers at the old customs house by the bay's edge; and undertook to intercede for the young explorer. At last Encheandia agreed that, on the execution of a heavy bond and an agreement to depart at once, Smith would be allowed to take his men from California.

That was in November 1827. Jedediah Smith sent for Thomas Virgin and struck out with his company up the Sacramento River. Desertions had cut down their number to nineteen. They traveled up the broad valley's eastern edge, and dallied for some weeks where the American River comes down from the long cañons among the high peaks, and after striving to cross the Sierras in the Spring of 1828 they gave it up.

Then Smith determined to go into the north until they were beyond the last Spanish settlements; to turn to the coast and follow it to the Columbia. Thence they would find easy going to the country along the headwaters of the Snake where he was due to meet Sublette in July.

The passing of the Springtime found them struggling through the forests of northern Mendocino and Trinity counties. Here was a country such as they had never seen before, where the trees were huge and the brush aras as thick as the hair on a dog's back cloaking steep hillsides. They found cañons where no horse could travel. As they neared the ocean the rain came and the fogs crept in on them. Sometimes they made less than two miles in a long day. Horses fell over the sheer cliffs. It seemed as if it were beyond the power of man to fight through these thickets and the narrow gorges.

It is known that one of the bearded

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

trappers carried a kitten with him, which he had got in the valley of the Sacramento; and when some wandering Indians up in the Klamath country stole the little animal, the event was set down in a diary which Harrison Rogers kept. There must have been some grieving in the camp that evening.

They topped the windy coast-hills and they came down to the shores of the Pacific. They shoved on northward, fording rivers, clinging to mountain-sides with the sea beneath their feet. They passed through great groves of giant redwoods. They bartered with the Indians whom they met, for the furs of the sea otter, for berries, fish and mussels.

Spring had gone and Summer was wearing on. July came. The trappers beginning to gather at Pierre's Hole under the Three Tetons. But there was no hope of Jedediah Smith meeting his partners in this year of 1828.

On the evening of July thirteenth they were on the Umpqua River—in what is now southwestern Oregon—a few miles back from its mouth. That was a pleasant camp. The men lay round the fires and talked of one thing—the road ahead of them.

For they had learned from the Indians that some fifteen or twenty miles up-stream there was a pass across the coast range, which would lead them down to the valley of the Willamette. And from there on, they would be in the region where the Hudson's Bay Company had blazed the trails before them.

The hour grew late, they rolled up in their blankets and fur robes. In the morning they rose; and after breakfast Jedediah Smith told them that he was going on ahead to scout out the route across the mountains. They could rest here in camp. Before he left he warned them to let no Indians into the place. Then he started off and the thick forest swallowed him.

The men lounged about the little opening. All around them the trees arose like a lofty wall; great Douglas firs with moss on their limbs and thickets of underbrush, dense as a tropic jungle. It was John Turner's day to cook. He stood by the fire, a giant of a man busying himself over a stew of venison. Arthur Black was cleaning his rifle off to one side. In days to come these two told what happened; they were the only ones to relate it.

The Indians came from their long canoes on the river and there were women with them. It was the old story. The captain was away. The men were weary of hardship; and here was a lure which made them forget orders. No one noticed how many of these natives there were; until the first yell sounded.

Arthur Black had just finished loading his rifle. He had the priming in the pan when the uproar began. He saw a mass of naked brown bodies milling there in the opening; clubs rose and fell. He fired his weapon into the thick of the mêlée and plunged into the brush with half a dozen savages after him. For some time he could hear them crashing through the thickets behind him; then the noise died away and he ran on and on, until at last he saw the light gleaming through the thinning branches and heard the roar of the surf ahead. He turned toward the north and struck out for the mouth of the Columbia.

John Turner heard the war-yell and plucked a blazing log from the cooking-fire. Three Indians were on his back. He shook them off and whirled the log above his head. Now as he ran toward the forest a dozen of the savages sprang up before him. He swept the flaming brand like a great flail and four of them fell under his blows. He dived into the thicket and ran up-stream for his life.

Smith was coming back to camp that afternoon when he heard a crackling in the brush and Turner burst through the jungle of green creepers. The giant sobbed out his story. He had got a look over his shoulder when he broke through the ring of Indians and had seen enough to know that there was no white man living in the clearing. So the two of them turned their faces toward the pass that led across the mountains to the Willamette Valley.

Two years of sweating and hardships with death always hanging round—and it had come to this; his companions were gone; his furs were lost to the last beaverskin. Jedediah Smith saw all his hopes destroyed, and himself helpless, seeking the protection of his mighty rivals, the Hudson's Bay Company.

ON THE north bank of the Columbia near the Willamette's mouth stood Fort Vancouver, surrounded by the dark forests of Douglas fir. Within the palisade of logs the buildings were

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ranged about a quadrangle; the trading-store, the quarters of the men, the cabins of the clerks. The factor's house fronted the square, a little aloof from the other structures. Here was the place of government, the center of the company's far-reaching power; the spot where plans were made and laws, the seat of the high justice, the middle and the low.

One evening in August Dr. John McLoughlin, the factor, was entertaining a guest in the long room where he administered the company's affairs. The loneliness which goes with power was his lot; it was but seldom that he had a man for company. So he was standing before the wide fireplace, making the most of his opportunity, listening to what the other had to say.

Czar of the West was what men called the factor. By virtue of the privileges conferred in the crown charter of the corporation, he ruled men's lives and property, with no appeal to go against his word, from the shores of the Pacific to the summits of the Rocky Mountains, from the Klamath River northward to the icy Alaskan fjords. He stood there before the open fire, straight as an arrow, lean-bodied, six feet two. His hair hung to his shoulders in a snowy mane.

The knack of courtesy was his. There was a fine consideration in the manner of his listening to his guest's talk. And behind it all, there was a deep interest.

For this man who sat beside the long, book-strewn table, was a great man among the trappers and the Indians; Peter Skeen Ogden, partisan of the Honorable the Hudson's Bay Company, explorer of long rivers and strange mountains, commander of a great brigade which ranged through the Snake River and the Pond Oreille country, just back from a year's wanderings. And the subject on which he was holding forth this evening, was one which had been uppermost in the factor's mind for four years past.

So John McLoughlin hearkened while Ogden told the latest news of the American trappers who were invading the company's dominions from the East. There had been a day—and not so long ago, but he could well remember it—when the factor had laughed, in this same room, at the likelihood of such an invasion; and he had said—

"They might as well try and reach the moon."

But they had come; and every season had brought its news of Indians lured away from trading, of deserting trappers and rivals on rich beaver-streams. This evening Ogden had some cheerful tidings to offset the usual story of growing competition. He was telling how half a dozen of the Americans had drifted into his Winter camp last Christmas eve, to find themselves snow-bound within the week; how Samuel Tullock, their commander, had tried for months to get his party back to the Great Salt Lake.

"They offered as high as twenty-five dollars a pair for snowshoes to the Indians," he was saying, "but I got word to the chief and they couldn't buy for love or money." He chuckled with the memory. "Later on they tried to get a messenger to go to Fitzpatrick. Eight beaverskins and fifty dollars was the figure they named. But not an Indian would budge. 'Twas coming Spring before they got away."

John McLoughlin's stern features relaxed a little with the picture of the Americans' discomfiture. He had not forgotten the furs which Ogden's deserters had betrayed down in Cache Valley, nor the fortune in skins which young Jedediah Smith had taken for convoying the Iroquois Indians to Alexander Ross. Somehow or other the subject which he was on seemed to have turned the mind of the partisan to that black-haired young competitor, for now he spoke his name.

"They told me this Summer on the upper Snake," said he, "that he was still in California."

And then the two of them fell to speculating as to the route which Smith would take to find his way back to the Continental Divide. And while they were at this there came a clamor at the gate; the factor stepped to one of the windows and raised it; they heard a jargon of voices.

"Some one outside the walls," McLoughlin said and lowered the sash. A moment or two later a footstep sounded on the veranda; there was a knock at the door and one of the clerks entered.

"The Indians have brought a strange trapper," he announced. "He says his companions were massacred down the coast."

So they conducted Arthur Black into the factor's house; and John McLoughlin heard him tell his story. When the tale was done he called one of the men who were standing outside the door on the wide veranda.

"Send out a party at daybreak," he

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ordered. "There may be others living."

He turned to Peter Skeen Ogden when the rest had departed.

"Strange; we were just talking of this young man, Smith," he said.

The two of them parted for the night. And in the morning as they stood on the wide veranda watching the expedition preparing to leave the fort, there came from the river-bank another crowd of Indians. The gates swung open; two half-naked white men staggered through them into the palisaded square, Ogden uttered a low exclamation and pointed to the smaller of the pair.

"That's Jedediah Smith," he said.

And so Smith came into the power of his great rival.

During the next few weeks he saw John McLoughlin send forth men with messages to distant tribes down the Willamette Valley; and he saw the answer to those summons returning to the fort—the rifles of his companions, the personal possessions of the dead, and then the plundered furs. There they lay upon the wide veranda of the factor's house, a fortune in beaverskins.

Once they had been his. Now according to the grim law of competition they belonged to his rivals. In his own day of good luck he had enforced that rule. Perhaps as he looked at the bundles now, he recalled the time when he had won those other pelts from Alexander Ross. It was a hard old game and he had lost.

He stood there while John McLoughlin counted the pelts and examined them. Good furs. Worth a fortune. The factor straightened up and remained silent, figuring for some moments. Then he looked into the eyes of the young man who had dared to invade his dominions. Probably he too remembered that incident of Ross' beaverskins—and other incidents; the loss of trade, Peter Skeen Ogden's cache betrayed by the deserter.

"According to the London prices this year," he said quietly, "they're worth thirty-two thousand dollars here."

That was a deal of money in those days and in that country—as much as ten times the amount would be now. The factor's face remained unmoved. He walked into his room and it was some moments before he came out with a slip of paper in his hand. He handed it to Jedediah Smith.

It was a draft on London for thirty-two thousand dollars.

SUCH things as that are fine to tell and fine to hear. The story has its sequel.

David Jackson and William Sublette met at the Summer rendezvous in the year of 1829. But Smith did not appear. The days passed; the two partners asked every incoming band of Indians and trappers for news of him, but they got none. More than a year overdue now, they gave him up for dead. The chances were, they told one another, he had fallen afoul of the Hudson's Bay people over there in the west. Well, if the Britishers were responsible for this, directly or indirectly, they would be made to suffer for it some day. So they told each other before they separated for the Fall hunt.

August came on and David Jackson was working the Henry's Fork of the Snake River. On the evening of the fifth of the month he was in camp with a number of trappers. One of them looked up.

"Some one coming," said he.

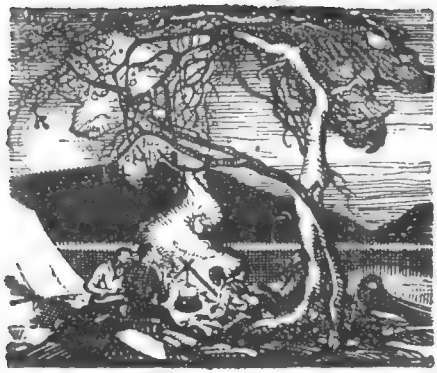
And then Jedediah Smith and Arthur Black walked into the camp. The giant Turner had remained behind in Oregon.

So Smith returned and within a few days the two partners fell in with Sublette just west of the Three Tetons. Here the trio sat down together and went over what had happened. Then they made their plans for the coming year. And Jedediah Smith announced a decision at which he had arrived on the day when John McLoughlin had handed that draft to him.

"I want you two to agree with me in this," he said. "Hereafter we will do our trapping and trading east of the Great Divide."

The others demurred at first. It was a big thing to give up, this country with its wealth of furs. But he insisted, and in the end he won his point. From that time on Smith, Jackson and Sublette abandoned the great plans which they had made on the Summer afternoon in 1826 by the shores of the Great Salt Lake. Not until after they had sold out their interests to the men who formed the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, did the Americans renew their competition against the Hudson's Bay.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



THE CAMP FIRE

A Meeting Place for Readers, Writers and Adventurers

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

CONCERNING his article in this issue, something from F. R. Bechdolt. Also concerning a minor point in a former article raised by one of you, and a word of acknowledgement and gratitude to those of you who have written to him in appreciation, often with valuable data.

Carmel, California.

Authorities include: "History of the American Fur Trade of the Far West," by Hiram Chittenden; "Ashley Smith Explorations," by Harrison Dale; "The Splendid Wayfaring," by John G. Neihardt; "Astoria," by Washington Irving; Inman's "Santa Fé Trail;" Bancroft (who is used only for incidents and small matters, as he is inaccurate) documents in California State library; old newspapers in California State library; "California, The American Period," by Robert G. Cleland; and some others which I can't recall just now. Descriptions of the country are mostly from my own memory of the localities as I saw them.

IN THE ending I have taken the liberty of making Peter Skeen Ogden and John McLoughlin be together when Smith came and of making them say certain things. Ogden was at Fort Vancouver then; he brought the news which I include in that conversation during his visit. Chances are, of course, he never really said these things at that particular moment. Also I have indulged in the license of giving verbatim conversation between Smith and McLoughlin where the actual words have never been really recorded.

In re the break in the story of the Texans— Say for me that I was asleep at the switch. I followed the context of an old narrative, which makes the same mistake, and did not notice it.

I have of late received a number of mighty nice

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

letters from old-timers and relatives of old-timers *in re* these stories, forwarded through *Adventure* in part and some addressed directly here. I wish you would make my acknowledgement for these and express my gratitude in Camp-Fire. I am trying to answer all personally. An attack of flu has put me away behind with work and correspondence, and I would like the word to go to the writers that I deeply appreciate their interest and their genuine help to me.

I am literally swamped with a desk piled high with unanswered letters.—BECHDOLT.

A COPY of the handsome Christmas number of the Rangoon *Times* dropped into the office, presumably sent by its editor, Major W. Robert Foran, formerly of our writers' brigade but now too busy in India for fiction writing. Major Foran was also one of the charter members of the Adventurers Club of New York, and later was a leading spirit in founding the Chicago Adventurers Club.

ON THE plan advocated in the following I do not feel competent to advance any opinion, a little knowledge being a dangerous thing. But there are plenty among you who are competent and in any case a man has a right—and a duty—to form his own opinion even if he does not feel warranted in asking others to accept it as theirs. It is a significant thing that our Camp-Fire should thus definitely be made a public forum on a national question. Mr. Davidson is not arguing for his plan but asking your opinion on it. And he is not doing so for merely academic purposes but because he contemplates campaigning for a U. S. senatorship from Arizona and because public opinion on the Federal Currency and State Security Plan is something he wants to ascertain before attempting the campaign and public advocacy of the plan.

A general discussion of the plan can not be carried on in "Camp-Fire" space, but whenever a man in public service or contemplating entering upon it wants, not to give his opinion, but to get the opinion of other Americans on a specific public problem for a definite purpose, I hope we can find a bit of space for any reasonable request of that kind. This magazine stands for real democracy, and the expression of public opinion is the very essence of democracy. The past has shown that Camp-Fire endorses these principles. I hope that every one of you interested for or against this plan will write, not to the magazine, but to Mr. Davidson direct stating your reasoned opinion.

Los Angeles.

I have missed reading only a very few numbers of *Adventure* since it first appeared. From out the circumambient darkness I have stolen up to the cheerful glow of the Camp-Fire and "listened in" on the boys. At times I have been close, quite close, to the speaker, for then he was telling of things and men not wholly strangers to me. But not he nor any other saw me there, for though I felt and knew that I was welcome, I remained, and departed, as I had come—in silence.

AND now that I have broken the long silence and presume to discard the easier and more popular rôle of interested listener for that of speaker, I realize that I am risking my hearty welcome; and if you have the patience to wade through the following and decide to pass it all on to the boys, they will probably remark that I "sure spilled a lot of conversation without saying much."

I recall your crusade of 1919 to arouse a more widespread and keener interest and realization of our responsibilities as citizens and voters in governmental affairs, and your effort to get some action in response to this realization. If you did not get all the results you expected it was probably because of too many such easy-going and quiet-loving individuals as myself, but your efforts were not in vain; no honest and sincere effort is ever lost; no effort, either good or bad is without some ultimate result. The seed you planted was good, and if the soil was mostly barren, surely some of this seed found fertile ground and will grow and bear fruit.

AND because of your attitude in such matters, and largely because you did awaken in me a sense of responsibility and an urge to act, I have decided to "lay in the laps of the gods" certain matters upon which an early decision seems necessary—matters in which no initiative or desire of mine had any concern, but which have to some considerable degree centered around me, and trouble me because of that awakened sense of political responsibility. And it has occurred to me that the best road to travel to reach Olympus and secure this decision from the gods is by way of *Adventure* through Camp-Fire.

And right here and now I say to you and to all who may read this, and I say it with all truth and sincerity, that I seek not fame, power nor glory, neither the emoluments of office. My greatest personal desire is to some day find

"A place that's known to God alone—
And let the rest of the world go by."

but, if like Cincinnatus, I must be taken from the plow to serve my country, I will bear that cross with fortitude and render my best and sincere service.

You may or may not have heard of The Federal Currency and State Security Plan. In 1919, after the Armistice was signed, the boys were coming home; were being turned loose with no money, with no place to go and nothing to do. There was much talk, some planning, but little was done. My brother, John F. Davidson, who was at that time and is yet residing at Kingman, Arizona, believed and urged that the various States and the Federal

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Government should provide immediate employment for the non-employed. There was plenty of needed and wealth-producing work at which the boys could have been profitably employed, such as the building of good roads, hydro-electric development, reclamation work, etc. The great obstacle, of course, was the lack of necessary capital with which to pay for labor and material. Burdened as the nation was with billions of war debts, it seemed hopeless to ask the Government to bond itself for further debts. But if billions could be spent for destruction, why could not a few millions be spent for construction? It was then that John F. Davidson conceived and formulated The Federal Currency and State Security Plan, the fundamental principles of which are as follows:

LET the State, in which the work is to be done, issue 30, 40 or 50-year 3% interest-bearing bonds in the amount necessary for the completion of the work proposed, and deposit these bonds with the Federal Treasury. The Federal Government would then issue currency against these bonds as security, and with this money the State would pay for the labor and material used. The project would necessarily be wealth-producing and revenue-producing, and from this revenue the State would pay to the Federal Treasury the interest on the bonds and set aside a fund with which to retire the bonds at maturity; the bonds retired, the currency could be recalled, the balance again restored; this additional wealth would have been produced; the State would have a perpetual revenue producer, and the Federal Government, instead of paying 4% or 5% for the use of money with which to do this work would have earned yearly 3% on the amount of the bonds, which profit could be applied to the reduction of Federal taxes.

JOHN F. DAVIDSON spent about three years of time and effort and several thousand dollars in trying to interest Congress, legislatures and governors in this plan. Incidentally I contributed something over a thousand dollars of hard earned cash and considerable time and effort in assisting him. I lived in Arizona from 1916 to 1919, and John F. has repeatedly and persistently importuned me to return to Arizona and re-establish my residence there before the elections in 1924 and to make the race for the office of U. S. Senator on a platform embodying the Federal Currency and State Security Plan.

Your space and time forbids my here entering into a long argument as to the feasibility and economic soundness of this Federal Currency and State Security Plan, but I warn you all not to make the almost universal mistake of referring to it as "a dangerous fiat money scheme," nor of comparing it to the unrestrained, unsound and non-wealth-producing issuance of marks and roubles, etc. There is a reason. Let all thinkers think and analyze. And do not advise me to refer the matter to professors or expert economists whose minds are running smoothly along in well worn grooves that have deepened with the passing of the centuries. We have changed for the better and made progress in nearly every important matter that affects the general welfare, except our monetary system, which is capably championed by, and a great success for, our bankers and big financiers, but a burden and a grief for the masses.

And I want an early expression from you and the readers of *Adventure* (among whom no doubt, are a number of professors, expert economists, bankers and financiers, who are, generally speaking, good fellows with honest, if sometimes mistaken, opinions) on this important subject—not as to whether I shall be Senator from Arizona, but as to whether you want and will work for the Federal Currency and State Security Plan.

With the best of wishes for all of you, I am.—WILLIAM A. DAVIDSON, 616 Bixel St., Los Angeles, Calif.

For my own personal information I asked an opinion on this plan from a man whose opinions in such matters I consider both soundly balanced and honest. I do not present it as by any means deciding the matter, but rather as a substitute in the referendum for the opinion I myself am not competent to advance:

I have to admit that his plan is at least as sound and defensible as some of the things that the Federal Government has begun to do and probably will be called upon more and more to do. The average financial expert will dismiss this plan with the flat statement that all it amounts to is an inflation of currency which, like any inflation, must drive up prices and undo all the benefits that are expected by increasing the cost of all commodities and the cost of living for the worker. This is all true, but it is insincere. The country has in the Federal Reserve System an elaborate banking machinery intended to adjust the currency of the country to its needs, but the Federal Reserve System is engaged all the time in inflating and deflating currency; that is the purpose of the system. The only objection to Davidson's plan that can be made is the assertion that the Federal Government should not go into the banking business and should not issue new currency even against securities. But a fair enough reply to this is that the Federal Government did this on an enormous scale during the war, is still doing it and will do it more and more as time goes on. The War Finance Corporation is a Federal banking institution which issued hundreds of millions of new currency during the war on agricultural securities, and is still doing it. Congress has just passed a rural credits bill which establishes a dozen or more new banking institutions for just this purpose. The fact that all of this was done by means of separately established banking institutions instead of by the Federal Treasury itself is only a detail.

In short, I see no valid objection to this plan except that it cuts the established bankers out of a lot of business and profits. I think that this would be a good thing for everybody in the long run, but I warn you that it is not orthodox opinion. I believe that it should not be necessary for a City, a State or the Federal Government to depend upon bankers and financiers for the credit necessary to finance the construction of permanent and productive improvements, such as subways, roads, reclamation of land, etc. As things are, however, these financial interests have things so tightly sewed up by legislation and otherwise that it is necessary for everybody, including the most powerful governments in the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

world, to pay them what they ask for their services.— — — —

ON THE occasion of his first story in our magazine, H. M. Sutherland follows Camp-Fire custom and rises to introduce himself:

New York.

Adventurers: I really haven't much to tell you about myself yet, hence the brevity of this, but I am hoping that adventure will come to me when I have completed the fund I am now saving toward a year's wandering in the out-of-the-way places of the world.

I COME from the hills that divide Virginia and Kentucky, the same Cumberlands made famous in fiction by the late John Fox, Jr., and spent a large part of my teens in the lumber camps and coal fields of West Virginia, Kentucky and Virginia, always in the mountains.

During college vacations I continued to work in these lumber camps and coal operations and saw one or two of the miners' strikes and various local labor disturbances. Occasionally played professional baseball in the coal field leagues. On leaving college (Richmond University, B. A. '17) I again went to the lumber camps where I was employed as "cruiser" and payroll man.

Came back to Richmond, Va., and entered newspaper work as reporter on the Richmond *Virginian* and later *Times Dispatch*. Finally managed to get into the army early in 1918 and in two weeks sailed overseas with the "Blue Ridge" Division. Both English and American fronts. (Buck private most of the time.)

Knocked out and spent the better part of two years in various army hospitals recovering. Entered Columbia University under Federal Board for Vocational Training for disabled vets and completed journalistic course in '21. Since that time I have been employed regularly on the staff of the New York *Evening Globe*. I also am an assistant instructor in the Columbia School of Journalism.

Twenty-six, unmarried, tennis fanatic and owner an excellent collection of rejection slips and a dog. Thus endeth the sketch.—H. M. SUTHERLAND.

GLAD to bring the following from Fred F. Fleischer of "A.A." to the attention of Camp-Fire:

If any of our readers whose ages run between 17 and 25 years feel like taking a vacation at Government expense, all they have to do is to apply to the Commanding Officer of the Corps Area (U. S. Army) in which they reside for permission to take the Military Training at one of the Summer Camps.

First Lieut. Fred F. Fleischer, 426 15th St., West New York, N. J., of our "Ask Adventure" section, will mail application blanks to all who apply to him direct and will also furnish all information required.

The National Defense Act of 1920 provides for the training of thousands of young men every year. The Government furnishes free transportation to and from Camp, proper shelter, three square meals a day, uniform, medical attendance. Not only does the training benefit every one physically, but it tends to make men of youths, better citizens and, above all, better Americans. It instills into the breasts of those who attend a love for the flag we all follow, gives them a real understanding of what the red-white-and-blue stands for and out of this understanding grows the attachment to ideals which are America, cleaner and better manhood, a guide for the rest of the world to follow.

We feel assured that the United States Army, in these Training Camps, is underwriting our idea of Americanism and that Camp-Fire will back us up in our desire to help as much as possible.

IN CONNECTION with his complete novel in this issue, something from Talbot Mundy:

This story is placed in an imaginary native state on the southeast coast of India, not so far, we'll say, from Travancore, where all the oldest customs still survive.

THE rulers of those old-fashioned states are usually themselves ruled by the *diwan*, as well as tied hand and foot by custom and tradition. But the *diwan* is subject to removal at whim, and is therefore the butt of perpetual intrigue, from priests especially. The people of those lesser states are usually quiet until the Hindu priests consider something might be gained by working up a riot; and the priests are generally safe in whatever they do, because of the British dislike for meddling with them—a dislike hugely to their credit. So the *diwan* has to keep the peace and outwit the priests without any open assistance, although, as in this instance, things occur now and then that don't get into the published reports.

The modern unrest is reaching the native states, and as the people, mainly illiterate, know no politics, about the easiest thing imaginable is to stir them up by means of wild tales. They are superstitious beyond belief and, though they often despise the priests themselves, they believe what the priests say—generally.

Almost any crowd begins by conceding infallibility to any one who claims it. When they find him out they smash him and either elect another man or permit another to elect himself. But they expect the new man, in turn, to be infallible.

I LIKE *Ommony*. That isn't his name, of course. I met him years ago in Bengal, and he let me shoot a tiger in a forest he was managing. The tales he told at night, in his little bungalow surrounded by the forest that he loves more than anything else on earth, were the most absorbing I ever heard. He is something of an astronomer, knows animals and trees as some men know arithmetic, and dreaded, as I remember, only one thing—retirement to London on a miserable pension. Funnily enough, he had a notion that the only place for a pensioned man was within a half-mile radius of Piccadilly Circus. A small flat on Shaftesbury Avenue, I think, was his idea of the inevitable. I hope he missed it!

He believed in reincarnation, although not of men's souls into the bodies of animals. He used to say it was ridiculous to suppose that sixty or seventy years could teach a man much; and equally ridiculous to imagine that the Universe could have any use for a blackguard or a fool. Therefore, according

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

to him, logically a man must come back to earth again and again in different bodies to learn common sense, and incidentally to face punishment for past offenses and mistakes. "And the same with animals. That's why I like 'em," he used to add.

I HAVE had to advance his period about 25 years in order to fit him into these stories. Otherwise he is as true to life as I can paint him in. I think his paramount good quality was recognition of other men's and other nations' strong points, and an almost superhuman tolerance for their defects. He had no use for imperialism. He used to say "Karma is the controlling influence. When we English have served our purpose in India we'll have to get out or be kicked out. But that will only be because there's some other job for us somewhere and the Indians are ready to paddle their own canoe. Meanwhile, work's excellent."

The natives who worked for him used to regard him as little less than a deity. I sincerely hope he isn't rotting into old age in a Shaftesbury Avenue two-room flat!—TALBOT MUNDY.

HERE is a letter that needs no comment, or, I think, any apology for printing its friendly words. No name was signed. Surely Camp-Fire has a warm and kindly welcome for this wife and mother who goes with us along our trails.

DEAR *Adventure*:—I have long wanted to write you but never had courage to do so. But since this will probably not be read, and certainly not printed, I want to tell you how much I have enjoyed your clean outdoor stories. I come of a family cursed—or blessed—with the "wandering foot" and after I married, my better three-fourths was also so inclined though never in a position to follow inclinations. When the boy grew large enough to read, he also liked the stories and we spent many, many happy evenings following unnoticed along strange trails with *Jimgrim*, *Lourenço* and *Pedro* and the others (*Magpie* and *Telescope Tolliver*, too). But "Himself" has set out on the last long trail toward the "great adventure," the boy has grown and developed wings that have taken him far away, and I still read the magazine. Usually buy it at the same place and the proprietor never fails to smile at my choice. Why? Because I am just a fat, lonely, old woman.

ABYSSINIA to most outsiders is unknown territory, a mystery, so I'm passing on to you the following interesting letter:

National Sporting Club, London, England.

I have lately been a reader of your magazine. What interests a wanderer like myself is the fact that your writers are men who know the world and are evidently wanderers themselves.

I was in Wyoming in '95 in the time of the Hole in the Wall gang. It was then quite wild and woolly. I served through the South African War and of course this war and have tramped most of Africa between Cape Town and Cairo. Before this war I walked from the Victoria Nyanza to Abyssinia and from the north end of Rudolf to the Nile.

ABYSSINIA is the finest and best country I have ever seen. California not excepted. It is unknown and even unexplored for thousands of miles. I particularly mention the Omo River from Addis Abeba to its mouth in Lake Rudolf. It is governed by a tribe called the Abyssinians which is Mediæval Africa personified.

Slaving and slave-dealing is wide open. I have seen thousands of negroes brought in for sale and have myself purchased several who had fallen on the road, to save them from death.

The Abyssinians have depopulated the country between Jorein and the British border some 300 miles.

The northern branch of the Abyssinian tribe called the Tigré are Jews. Their history is as follows: When the Jews cleared out of Egypt a large number of them were left behind when the north wind stopped blowing and so were stuck. They could not stop in Egypt so they cleared out along the Red Sea until they arrived in the Abyssinian hills. Here they made friends with the natives and intermarried with them. Being traders they got into touch with their former brothers by sailing up the Red Sea. It was they who brought the news of Solomon and his greatness to the Queen of Abyssinia (Sheba). She visited him and had a son by him, Menelik I. To this day the title of the king of Abyssinia is "So and So, the son of Solomon, the son of David, etc., etc.," and their proclamations begin: "The Lion of Judah has conquered." You must not, however call them Hebrews, as they are fanatical Christians and it would, to them, be a great insult.

THE legend of the escape of the Children of Israel from the Egyptians is evidently true. You see, before the Suez Canal was cut there was a regular caravan track across the Bitter Lakes to the Wells of Masa (Moses). While the north wind was blowing, which it does for some five months of the year, the shallow water of the lakes used to be driven back and there was a narrow sand-spit running across. This can sometimes still be seen.

When the north wind stops, the water trickled back. All this is a well known fact, but the editor who wrote about it did not quite stick to the absolute facts, but made a good story about it, as is the habit of those animals even unto this day.

There is a tribe of Jews living in Abyssinia today called *Falasha*. They, however, are recent arrivals and came there about the time of Mohammed. They are Jews and of the Jewish religion. They never enter the house of any one except he be of their own religion and never marry with any other tribe. I shall be pleased to answer any questions you may ask me *re* this country.

IT CAN be got at easily. By boat to Djibutil on the Red Sea and by the worst train in the world, bar one, from Djibutil to Addis Abeba. It is a fertile and healthy country, growing wheat, maybe potatoes, etc., etc., etc. You can live easily on the food of the country and drink their liquor too. No pussyfoot here. Good whisky 5s., i. e. one dollar, a bottle and their own distillery is still cheaper.

I have walked through coffee growing wild for hundreds of miles. Splendid forests sixty feet high, but hard wood, not soft timber. Horses twenty to fifty dollars.

Elephants, lions, gold, copper, rubber untouched and *don't you touch it* unless you want all the trouble

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

in the world as the Abyssinians *do not want* white men.

The south and west are the best parts of the country. If any of you fellows have the wanderlust bad, here you are for the next twenty years. All you want is a passport, your saddle and *plenty of money*, as there is no money in the country and no jobs going, but except for the Abyssinians it is the only white man's country in Africa.

Please don't publish my name as I do not want to spend any time writing instructions to people who do not intend to go there.

Mind you, if you want to know anything or recommend any one, I shall only be too charmed to assist in any way.— ——— ——; late Major, R. F. A.

To make sure we'd correctly copied proper names and such I sent the letter and our typed copy to William Ashley Anderson of our writers' brigade and formerly of our staff, who, I knew is familiar with Abyssinia at first hand and whose serial, laid in that country, not long ago appeared in *Everybody's*. It stirred his interest and brought forth a second interesting letter:

Montauk, New York.

Many thanks for the chance to read Major —'s letter on Abyssinia. I share the major's enthusiasm, and endorse his remarks heartily, with a few variations.

A FEW of the major's remarks may arouse misconceptions of Abyssinia. For instance, the Abyssinians do not constitute a tribe. Abyssinia is distinctly an empire; and the major divisions of the country are kingdoms. It is somewhat of a paradox, because though it is a nation of great antiquity, very few evidences of antiquity can be found in the whole country except in the character of the people themselves. Abyssinia is a synonym for Ethiopia; but native Abyssinians or Ethiopians are not negroes, contrary to the popular belief. The ruling kingdom is Shoa in the heart of Abyssinia, with Addis Abeba as the capital. The capital is hardly more than a very loose assemblage of villages of mud, wattle and thatch, with a few more substantial buildings used as warehouses and shops by a comparatively few Hindus, Arabs, Jews, and Europeans; yet every great European power maintains a legation there with quite a degree of formality. In 1916, at the period of the Civil War, the British minister was Col. Thesiger, brother of the Viceroy of India. In his stables, incidentally, he had a string of forty polo ponies.

THE true Abyssinians are a mingling of the Hamites and Semites, with varying degrees of negro blood, no doubt, because of the system of slavery. The major confuses Abyssinia with Sheba, whose queen was the mother of the first Abyssinian king (by Solomon). Ancient Sheba, or Saba, the land of the Sabæans, was in southern Arabia.

The history of Abyssinia is too rich and involved for a letter. Certain facts, however, are worth noting. The Abyssinians placed several dynasties on the throne of Egypt. An Abyssinian army once raised a siege of Jerusalem. When Cambyses attempted an invasion of Abyssinia, the Persian army was destroyed in the deserts to the north. Abyssinia was the land of the fabulous Christian monarch, Prester John, whom the early Portuguese explorers sought, and found. It was Christianized in the third and fourth centuries, is still fanatically Christian, and represents the survival of the original Alexandrian church. Its language, the Amharic, is distinct, and its literature rich.

THE history of modern Abyssinia records equally remarkable facts. It repelled all Mohammedan attempts at conquest, though in this it was aided by Portuguese. Great Britain invaded the kingdom of Amhara in 1868. No other attempt at military invasion has been made by a foreign power except for the disastrous Italian expedition of 1896 which met with overwhelming defeat. At the decisive battle of Adowa the Italians lost 10,000 men in killed and wounded; and the remarkable fact was that the Italian force was *smothered under rifle fire*, and completely outmanœuvred tactically though they had the initial advantage.

The political system of Abyssinia is feudal. The dominant state is Shoa. Every Shoan man is equipped with firearms. Until recently there was no popular coinage in the country, bullets and salt alone being used as currency. Abyssinia is supposed to have a standing army of 250,000 men, formed of levies, which can be supplemented in large numbers. It possesses a number of batteries of field guns.

FOREIGNERS are courteously treated. I found the Abyssinians of the ruling class to be gentlemen and first rate men. The court language is French, and most of them speak this language gracefully. Their manners are polite, though their customs are rude and barbaric. They are extremely resentful of any assumption of superiority on the part of foreigners, and are perfectly justified in that no foreigner has ever been able to prove superiority when it came to a test.

Abyssinians care nothing for money. They care a great deal for honor. They are not quarrelsome, but when aroused are very fierce and barbarous fighters. At the battle of Koromasch (or Silti), the decisive battle of the civil war of 1916, estimates of the number engaged varied between 150,000 and 250,000 men. They fought hand-to-hand for eleven hours. I myself counted 50,000 soldiers marching in triumphal review shortly after the battle.

Ras Taffari, who became regent as a result of the civil war, is a well educated young man and an enlightened and progressive ruler. When I met him at the height of his tremendous successes, he appeared remarkably modest, gentle, pleasant and respected.

ABYSSINIA, all in all, is as beautiful as any country I have seen. It has not the rare beauty of Kashmir, or the almost violent beauty of Hawaii; but it has not the limitations of those places. Surrounded by deserts and plains, it is a tableland elevated about 6,000 feet above the sea, rising abruptly from the deserts that stretch away eastward to the Red Sea, and draining westward into lakes and rivers that feed the Nile and southward into the Indian Ocean. In the uplands I have ridden through meadows of wild peas in blossom and extensive fields of golden mustard. It is the original home of the coffee plant, which, as the major says, grows wild in great profusion. In the north,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

mountain peaks rise to the point of perpetual snow.

The Abyssinians are mainly pastoral in their habits, and, wisely, do not intend to be forced into adopting foreign forms of civilization which would imply subjection. The recent sudden interest in the question of Abyssinian slavery is one of many indications that foreign powers, notably Great Britain, France and Italy, acting in concert, wish at last to gain popular sanction for a final determined invasion of the one remaining unconquered country of Africa. The hypocrisy of this is evident in the fact that no one in these days of Mohammedan pugnaciousness insists on stamping out slavery in Mohammedan countries where it is still practised.

THE main things that can be said against the Abyssinians is that they are barbarous in warfare (in other words, they are warlike!), they are entirely ignorant of sanitation and hygiene (certainly with unpleasant results), and they refuse to admit that they are the natural inferiors of Europeans and Americans and are willing to maintain that belief at the risk of their lives.

I never met the major, but I have no doubt we have mutual acquaintances somewhere up and down Africa. Many thanks again for showing me his letter, and if you wish to supplement it for Camp-Fire with any of my own remarks, I'll consider it a compliment to be admitted to the *shauri*.—W. A. ANDERSON.

SO THAT he'd not have a chance to cuss me afterward for saying things about him without warning, I sent to Bill Adams a copy—before it went to the printer—of what I'd written about him and his "Slants on Life" that have now begun to appear regularly in our magazine. From two letters from him here are some bits that bear upon the occasion:

As regards this stuff you are running in Camp-Fire. I suppose it's what might be termed "elegant" ain't it? Or "cute"? Durn your hide.

It's devilish hard to know what to think, isn't it? Let alone what to say!

It's so cussed hard to remember that the other fellow's viewpoint is as much entitled to consideration as our own. Uh-huh! I dunno.

Darn you anyway. I wish you'd dry up.

I bought a can of baccy this evening and tomorrow I'm going to buy a fish-hook. I wish I knew how many pups my little yaller bull dawg will have and what's a fair price to ask for 'em.

I am tired. Wish I was a little nipper with a mother—but it's no use to wish that. It's something I never did have or know a thing about.

What did you send me this junk for? I'll write something "cute" about you one of these days. See if I don't.

Well—it's all very very nice of you, but—'tisn't so, most of it.

At least I don't think it is. If there were a mail service to the stars I'd not send it back to you. I'd mail it up to the woman who bore me and died, and tell her I was trying—and ask her to go on praying for me.

That's all.—BILL.

DEAR ARTHUR,

You know when any one says the sort of thing about one that you said about me in that introduction in Camp-Fire to the "slants on life" it is a terribly grim burden to carry for the one who gets so spoken of.

God knows I'd like to be something better than the muddy grub I am, wriggling thus ineffectually, trying to see a ray of light above me.

Perhaps there'll come another day, another age, another star, when I will have emerged from this hard shell that binds my soul today. Perhaps, then, the prison of this chrysalis will be split asunder and I may hover up, up a little way, toward the brighter purer lights. I hope so.

Meanwhile we'll just keep on wriggling, squirming, striving to escape the prison bars of today; striving to grow a little bit, ever so little a bit, toward the time when that good day shall be.—BILL.

FOLLOWING old Camp-Fire custom, Philip M. Fisher rises and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

Oakland, California.

Dear Camp-Fire: You've got nothing on this thing the editor calls self-introductions—my face is not only flaming red at this moment, but my feet as well as my back are shivering with the cold chills of humility and embarrassment. Nevertheless, I suppose one must stagger up, and put you all wise to certain infirmities you are sure to spot sooner or later when the flames rise to the next log. Here's the damning evidence:

BORN here in Oakland, California, in 1891—still young and harnsome and unmarried, too. Forward—MARCH! Went to the University of California intending to be a mining engineer, but soon discovered the fallacy in my judgment, and decided that the law was my real calling. This was another error. You know how it is. Went to teaching night school in a district where certain American-born sons of South European fathers held the happy idea that Liberty meant License—if you want adventure, try this line; before my first night's appearance the police gave me a star and a gun and a lot of advice. All were needed. Daytimes I used for recuperation and "looking around." Job-lot education doesn't get one a million in the first year out of college—it may help one to write, but I may be mistaken there also. At any rate Fate let me sell an article—a clear directing finger, I felt, to my true metier. But as to that, too, it may not have been Fate, but only Fatuity. Only Time can tell.

HAD had four years' motor boating about San Francisco Bay when the war came, so joined up in the Navy. Got a job as ensign and was lucky enough to hit destroyer service—but on the Pacific Coast. Stayed in after Peace brought the real trouble, and was lucky enough to hit the Orient with the old Thirteenth Destroyer Division, the finest outfit of "sea-goin' " broncs, by the Bones of Noah! that ever bucked a typhoon in the China Sea. Sweated off fifteen pounds in a few months in Manila Bay, so you can see why *Marsh* in the yarn I've just told, wanted to get back to the States. But I had to leave him there, and I think it served him right.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The schooner, on which he thought he had Fortune by the throat, might be any one of a score tied up to the Intramurosside embankment of the Pasig River in Manila—and Balayan Bay, in southern Luzon, looked to me one night as it probably did to him. Incidentally, I've always liked the idea of an utterly cold-blooded and calculating fish being caught by some hitch in the actual working of his own devilish ingenuity. That's why I handed you "Prepared." You see?

That's about all the wind in my bag in this regard, I think. Oh yes, I'm out of the Navy now. Last year built a shack up on the American River in El Dorado County. Trout begin to strike in May. Drop in; if Fate is still my friend, there'll be plenty of canned chow at any rate, and all the water in the world to drink. Here's to the Camp-Fire, fellows! I'm tickled pink to join you. Gimme a match!—PHILIP M. FISHER, JR.

THE extent to which we have drifted away from a real understanding of democracy is startling and tragic. The howl against Prohibition splits the skies, yet any infringement of personal liberty by Prohibition is as nothing compared to the infringement, increasing daily, on all sides and in all respects, of our personal freedom and of our Constitutional right to freedom of assemblage.

You see, freedom of speech and assemblage are the very essence, the very heart, the very foundation of democracy. Every time a bit of this freedom is taken away, a bit of democracy is taken away. There *can be* no democracy without it. How could there?

And yet how many good and sincere Americans do you hear crying out against allowing this freedom to American citizens of opinions opposed to their own! Freedom of speech and assemblage is fine, but not if the other fellow tries to use it. What do these patriotic and "democratic" Americans do when any one, even a sincere American, preaches anything even remotely resembling Bolshevist doctrine? They yell for the police or invoke mob law or rave about invasion of American institutions—they themselves being the most dangerous, though best willed, invaders of said American institutions. No Bolshevik could strike so hard at the very root of our democracy as do they who thus strike at freedom of opinion.

IT IS all very simple. If our "democracy" has become so little a democracy that free expression of contrary opinion can wreck it, then it is no longer sufficiently a democracy or sufficiently worth while to be worth keeping. We can not be a democracy without being one. If we *are* one and if we are worth while, then by —— we are strong enough to stand it when a few people "shoot off their mouths" against our system of government.

If there are a majority of citizens in this country who want something other than democracy, then, by the very terms of democracy, it is time to change to that something else. If only a minority want the something else but there are enough of the majority who are too lazy to voice their will and thus give control to the minority, that too is merely the working of democracy. If citizens thus throw away their citizenship and become drones, neuters, eunuchs, they have forfeited any claim upon democracy, any rights or voice in it, and that democracy is doomed.

LISTEN, anti-English enthusiasts, there are some things in which we'd do well to copy England. England lets anarchists, Bolsheviki or any one else preach their views and even furnishes them police protection, if necessary, while they do it. They *have* freedom of speech, while we merely rant about it and exert ourselves at killing it off. And which, do you think, is the more dangerous to a government, the man allowed to preach to his heart's content or the "martyr" who is leaped upon as very dangerous? Which gets the better advertising? Which makes the stronger "under dog" appeal? Which, directly or indirectly, makes his arguments take deeper hold? Which works more harm to the institutions he attacks, the free speaker who merely talks or the suppressed "martyr" who gets his message over in other and secret ways and whose suppression leads its followers to stab the very institution they think they are protecting?

IT'S got so bad in this country that every movement of the people to organize among themselves is looked upon as Bolshevistic and dangerous, unless they organize along "conservative" lines and for the suppression of the very freedom they should advocate. Do you remember the mayor of a big Middle Western city who crowned himself one of the asses of eternity by condemning the neighborhood block system as dangerously Bolshevistic? That pitiful moron had probably never heard of the New England town meeting which is both

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

the essence and practise of democracy itself. There is no hope for this country and its democracy unless its citizens do organize among themselves for active participation in their own public affairs—for free discussion and free expression in free assemblage and for the enforcement of that expression of the people's will upon the public officials whose duty it is to execute the will of the people.

An American's duty to his country is not to suppress the other fellow's opinion but to express his own. And to see to it that majority opinion is expressed and that this expression controls the country's affairs. If Americans wake up to this duty it will be a good many years before they have any time left for suppressing other people's opinions.

YOU can't get away from this: If this is a democracy, there must be freedom of speech and assemblage. If this freedom is taken away from any, it is taken away from all. If there is not freedom of speech and assemblage, then this is not a democracy. You *can't* have the one without the other.—A. S. H.

ONE of us. Quite a little history briefly told: San Jose, California.

I would like to say that I have read *Adventure* from San Francisco to Siberia, and from China and India to Australia and South American sea-ports, to New York, and in a few of the Pacific Islands.

I've knocked around for eighteen years now and am only thirty-seven years old, so guess I've a few years more to go for they say "A man isn't ready to settle down until he's past fifty years old."—A. W. HUTCHINS.

FROM Camp-Fire Station No. 131 a word by its keeper as to some changes there:

"Forsythia," North Muskegon, Mich.

Addressing the Camp-Fire the first time, though not the last, I wish to make a statement regarding the article regarding my Station which appeared in the issue of March 10.

AT THE time the information given in that article was released to Camp-Fire I was publishing the *Peninsular Clarion* at North Muskegon, Michigan. I have, however suspended publication of this sheet and am now engaged organizing a news service to be known as the Forsyth Publishers News and Feature Service. Things are coming along nicely.

I did not wish the article to be misleading and am making this statement for that reason. However, the Station, Number 131, is still "in the go" and is, I fear, receiving more attention from myself than is good for my organization, a great deal of time being given it due to my great interest in Camp-Fire. "Visitors," as the article read, "*are* always welcome," and I'm anxiously awaiting a few new visitors to sign up on the register.

Recently, as a witness in court, I had the good fortune to meet prosecuting attorney Harry Jackson of Muskegon County. Jackson is a true Camp-Fire enthusiast and tells me that he believes he has read *Adventure* ever since it has been published.

Station keepers: let's hear from a few of you as to what you're doing.—JAMES FORT FORSYTH.

A STATION may be in any shop, home or other reputable place. The only requirements are that a Station shall display the regular Station sign, provide a box or drawer for mail to be called for and preserve the register book.

No responsibility for mail is assumed by anybody; the Station merely uses ordinary care. Entries in register to be confined to name or serial number, route, destination, permanent address and such other brief notes or remarks as desired; each Station can impose its own limit on space to be used. Registers become permanent property of Station; signs remain property of this magazine, so that if there is due cause of complaint from members a Station can be discontinued by withdrawing sign.

A Station bulletin-board is strongly to be recommended as almost necessary. On it travelers can leave tips as to conditions of trails, etc., resident members can post their names and addresses, such hospitality as they care to offer, calls for any travelers who are familiar with countries these residents once knew, calls for particular men if they happen that way, etc., notices or tips about local facilities and conditions. Letters to resident members can be posted on this bulletin-board.

Any one who wishes is a member of Camp-Fire and therefore entitled to the above Station privileges subject to the Keeper's discretion. Those offering hospitality of any kind do so on their own responsibility and at their own risk and can therefore make any discriminations they see fit. Traveling members will naturally be expected to remember that they are merely guests and act accordingly.

Keepers answer letters only if they wish. For local information write "Ask Adventure."

A Station may offer only the required register and mail facilities or enlarge its scope to any degree it pleases. Its possibilities as headquarters for a local club of resident Camp-Fire members are excellent.

The only connection between a Station and this magazine is that stated above, and a Keeper is in no other way responsible to this magazine nor representative of it.

Alabama—50—Fairfield. Percy E. Coleman, 405 Forty-fifth St.

Arkansas—161—Hot Springs. Tom Manning, Jr., 322 Morrison Ave.

California—44—Oakland Lewis F. Wilson, 836 Seventh Ave.
28—Lost Hills. Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Monson, Cottage Inn.
38—Los Angeles. Colonel Wm. Strover, Westlake Military School, Mount Washington.
60—San Bernardino. Charles A. Rouse, Hotel St. Augustine.
73—Galt. E. M. Cook, Box 256.
74—Eagle Rock. John R. Finney, 109 Eddy Ave.
89—Chico. K. W. Mason, 1428 Park Ave.
108—Helendale. G. R. Wells, P. O. Box 17.
113—Vallejo. Edith G. Engesser, Golden Triangle Rabbitry, Highway Homes.
114—Mill Valley, Louis F. Guedet, Restawhyle Knoll.
115—Los Gatos. G. H. Johnson.
116—Sabastopol. Mrs. Lucy E. Hicks, 420 S. Main St.
126—Covelo. Whit H. Ham. Box 388.
141—Santa Cruz. A. W. Wyatt, Capitola Road and Jose Ave.
149—San Francisco. A. H. Hutchinson, Veteran Press, 1264 Valencia St.
186—Santa Ysabel. William Strover, Santa Ysabel Inn.

Colorado—105—Grand Junction. Bart Lynch, 236 Main St.
176—Denver. Elmer S. Burrows, 3407 Larimer St.

Connecticut—103—New Haven. Ralph Pierson, 3 Yale Station.
142—Meriden. Homer H. Brown, 1 Colony Place.

D. C.—167—Washington. Walter A. Sheil, 503 Sixth St. N. E.

Florida—87—Miami. A. C. Smith, 49 N. E. First St.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

117—Miami. Miami Canoe Club, 115 S. W. South River Drive.
128—Titusville. Max von Koppelow, Box 1014.
129—Clearwater. E. E. Preston, 504 Vine St.
139—St. Petersburg. Capt. Lee Whetstone, Hotel Poinsettia.
143—St. Petersburg. J. G. Barnhill, 10 Third St. N.
158—Crescent City. E. N. Clark, care *Courier*.
179—Key West. William McCarthy, 201 Fleming St.

Georgia—98—Hinesville. R. N. Martin, *The Liberty County Herald*.

Idaho—110—Pocatello. C. W. Craig, 223 S. Second Ave.

Indiana—18—Connersville. Norba Wm. Guerin, 112 East Eighteenth St.
90—Linton. Herschell Isom, 73 Tenth St., N. E.
180—Warsaw. Homer Lewis.

Illinois—47—Peoria. B. H. Coffeen.
66—Mt. Carmel. W. C. Carter, 1122 Chestnut St.
67—Plainfield. J. P. Glass, The Linshield Co.

Kentucky—144—Corbin. Keith Mauney.

Maine—19—Bangor. Dr. G. E. Hathorne, 70 Main St.
59—Augusta. Robie M. Liscomb, 73½ Bridge St.
111—Lewiston. Howard N. Lary, 714 Main Street.

Maryland—65—Baltimore. Henry W. L. Fricke. 1200 E. Madison St. at Asquith.
80—Baltimore. Joseph Patti, Jr., 4014 E. Lombard St.
151—Williamsport. L. J. Schaefer. Frederick St.

Michigan—69—Grand Rapids. Dr. A. B. Muir, 1133 Lincoln Ave., N. W.
79—Lansing. Geo. H. Allen, *Lansing Industrial News*, 109½ N. Washington Ave.
80—Detroit. R. A. Taylor, 5129 Maybury Grand.
106—Gaylord. Sidney M. Cook.
131—North Muskegon. James Port Forsyth, Forsyth Publisher's Service, Phone 5891.
137—Flint. O'Leary & Livingston, 309 So. Saginaw St

Minnesota—112—St. Paul. St. Paul *Daily News*, 92 E. Fourth St.
145—Brainerd. F. T. Tracey, care Brainerd Gas & Electric Co.
181—Ortonville. T. Glenn Harrison. *The Ortonville Independent*.

Mississippi—88—Tunica. C. S. Swann, Box 244.
99—Picayune. D. E. Jonson.

Missouri—51—St. Louis. W. R. Hoyt. 7921 Van Buren St., phone Riverside 250.
94—St. Louis. C. Carter Lee, M. D., 3819 Olive St.
127—Salem. Emmet C. Higgins, 100 N. Tenth St.

Nebraska—95—Omaha. L. W. Stewart, 119 No. 16th St.

New Mexico—96—Silver City. Edward S. Jackson, Box 435.

New Jersey—17—Caldwell. Chas. A. Gerlard. Box 13.
164—Chatham. Roy S. Tinney.
16—Bayonne. J. D. Gray, 92 West Sixth St.
91—Tenafly. Ed Stiles, P. O. Box 254.
146—Paterson. Charles S. Gall, 378 Dakota St.

New York—23—Jamestown. W. E. Jones, 906 Jefferson St.
34—New York City. St. Mary's Men's Club, 142 Alexander Ave., Bronx, N. Y. C.
93—Rochester. Thomas C. Murphy, 62 Swan St.
107—New York City. Bronx Division, U. S. Junior Naval Reserves, 3132 Webster Ave.
140—New York City. L. D. Montgomery, U.S.S. *Utah*.
147—Youngsville. Harry Malowitz, Youngsville House.
165—Saratoga. Wm. Marshall, Office No. 9, Chamber of Commerce Arcade.
171—Albany. 224 Greene St.
177—Brooklyn. George Iverson, 306 Macon St.
185—Brooklyn. J. M. Canavan, 69 Bond St.

North Carolina—92—Asheville. B. Taylor and C. M. Gravatt. The Southern Spar and Mica Co., 322 Haywood Bldg.
133—Pine Bluff. N. Steve Hutchings.
159—Waynesville. Harry M. Hall, 720 Walnut St.

North Dakota—109—Stanley. Dr. W. W. Coe, Box 301.
160—Fargo. James E. Cowan, Central Garage, rear Grand Theatre.

Ohio—58—Cleveland. J. F. Thompson, Community Pharmacy, 9505 Denison Ave.
52—Ulrichsville. Anthony Sciasra, 329 W. Fourth St.
63—Ulrichsville. Chas. F. Burroway, 312 Water St.
75—Columbus. Chas. W. Jenkins, 54 S. Burgess Ave.
113—Buena Vista. Geo. T. Watters.
166—Toledo. Frank P. Carey, 3267 Maplewood Ave., or wherever his Ford happens to be.

Oklahoma—57—Haskell. Roy Holt.

Oregon—4—Salem. D. Wiggins.
187—Portland. W. J. Belduke, 29½ N. Ninth St.

Pennsylvania—20—Philadelphia. Wm. A. Fulmer, 252 S. Ninth St.
21—Braddock. Clarence Jenkins, Union News Co.
24—Philadelphia. Alfred A. Krombach. 4150 N. Eighth Street, and Spring Mills Station, P. & R. Ry. Co., Montgomery County.
78—Pittsburgh. Peter C. Szarmach, 3201 Brereton St.
100—Philadelphia. Veterans of Foreign Wars, 926 N. 41st St.
121—Philadelphia. Don L. Brown, 3444 D St.
152—Harrisburg. Mrs. L. H. Wistrand, Box 1027.
182—Greensburg. Don Frederick Wermuth.

South Dakota—179—Fairburn. Jesse K. Fell, *Custer County Press*.

Texas—33—Houston. J. M. Shamblin, 2003 Gray St.
123—San Juan. D. L. Carter, Box 436.
134—Breckenridge. Joe Randel, 226 Baylor Avenue.
135—Mexia. Charles O. Hurley, M. D.
148—Port Arthur. Ralph C. Cornwell, 215 Eighth St.
174—San Angelo. E. M. Weeks, 24 West Eighth St.
183—South San Antonio. J. F. Nicodemus, Box 111.

Utah—157—Salt Lake City. Ned Howard, 127 N. St.

Vermont—56—Fort Ethan Allen. E. Worth Benson, Box 10.

Virginia—108—Cape Charles. Lynn Stevenson, Custom House Building.

Washington—1—Ione. A. S. Albert, Albert's Billiard Hall.
61—Burlington. Judge B. N. Albertson, Fairhaven Ave.
83—Seattle. Chas. D. Raymer, Raymer's Old Book-Store, 1330 First Ave.
153—Monroe. Ed. L. Carson, *The Monitor*.
154—Mt. Vernon. Miss Beatrice Bell, Western Washington Auto Club.
155—Olympia. B. F. Hume, Commercial Club Rooms.
172—Sunnyside. Mark Austin.

West Virginia—48—Huntington. John Gelske, 1682 Sixth St.

Wisconsin—41—Madison. Frank Weston, 401 Gay Bldg.
5—Milwaukee. Paul A. Buerger, Apt. 2, 150 Biddle St.
138—Tomahawk Lake. Mrs. J. S. Hughson, Hughson's Resort.

Africa—173—Sinkat, Red Sea Province, Sudan. W. T. Moffat.

Australia—39—Melbourne. William H. Turner, 52 Emmaline St., Northcote; and Carters' and Drivers' Union, 46 William St.
76—Victoria. Chas. M. Healy, 30, The Avenues, Windsor Post, Dist. No. 8.
130—Brisbane. H. V. Shead, Sutton St., Kangaroo Pt.

Belgium—131—Antwerp. Reuben S. James, Rue Chapelle de Grace 4.—Grage Kapel-straat, 4.

Canada—31—Howe Sound. C. Plowden, Plowden Bay.
84—White Rock, B. C. Charles L. Thompson.
22—Burlington, Ontario. T. M. Waumsley, Jocelyn Bookstore.
4—Dunedin, P. E. Island. J. N. Berrigan.
29—Deseronto. Harry M. Moore, *The Post Weekly*.
45—Norwood, Manitoba. Albert Whyte, 1785½ De Meurons St.
30—Winnipeg, Man. Walter Peterson, 143 Kennedy St.
62—Woodstock, Ontario. George L. Catton, 94 Metcalfe St.
85—Oshawa, Ontario. J. Worral, 6½ King St. E.
102—Amherst. Lloyd E. MacPherson, 5 Belmont St.
124—Hartshorn, Alberta. Leonard Brown, 33-34-17 W4M.
178—Moncton, N. B. Chas. H. McCall, 178 St. George St.

Newfoundland—132—St. John's. P. C. Mara, Smallwood Bldg.

Canal Zone—37—Cristobal. F. E. Stevens.
156—Ancon. Arthur Haughton, Box 418.

Cuba—15—Havana. Ricardo N. Farres, Dominquez, 7 Cerro.
175—Miranda, Oriente. Volney L. Held.

Great Britain—65—North Wales. William J. Cooper, "Kia-Ora," Plastirion Ave., Prestatyn.

Hawaiian Islands—170—Leilehua, Oahu, Château Shanty.

Honduras, C. A.—32—Galeras, Olancho. Dr. Wm. C. Robertson.
70—La Ceiba. Jos. Buckly Taylor.

Mexico—68—Guadalajara, Jal. W. C. Money, Hotel Fenix, Calle Lopez, Cotilla Nos. 269 a 281.
136—Tampico, Tamps. Jack Hester, care of T. D. El Humo, Apartado 238.

Navy—71—U. S. *Arizona*. Elmer E. McLean.

Porto Rico—46—Ensenada. M. B. Couch, P. O. Box 5.

Various Practical Services to Any Reader

In the last issue of each month are printed in full the friendly services of *Adventure* to readers: Free Identification Card in eleven languages (metal, 25 cents); Mail Address and Forwarding Service; Back Issues Exchanged; Camp-Fire Buttons; Camp-Fire Stations, etc.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached,* are enclosed. (See footnote at bottom of page.) Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

1. The Sea Part 1 American Waters
BERIAH BROWN, 1624 Biegelow Ave., Olympia, Wash. Ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (*See next section.*)

2. The Sea Part 2 British Waters
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care *Adventure*. Seamanship, navigation, old-time sailorizing, ocean-cruising, etc. Questions on the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire go to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown.

3. The Sea Part 3 Statistics of American Shipping
HARRY E. RIESENBERG, 3633 New Hampshire Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C. Historical records, tonnages, names and former names, dimensions, services, power, class, rig, builders, present and past ownerships, signals, etc., of all vessels of the American Merchant Marine and Government vessels in existence over five gross tons in the United States, Panama and the Philippines, and the furnishing of information and records of vessels under American registry as far back as 1760.

4. Islands and Coasts Part 1 Islands of Indian and Atlantic Oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care *Adventure*. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*See next section*).

5. Islands Part 2 Haiti, Santo Domingo, Porto Rico, Virgin and Jamaica Groups
CHARLES BELL EMERSON, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif. Languages, mining, minerals, fishing, sugar, fruit and tobacco production.

6. ★ New Zealand; and the South Sea Islands Part 1 Cook Islands, Samoa
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. Travel, history, customs; adventure, exploring, sport. (*Postage ten cents.*)

7. South Sea Islands Part 2 French Oceania (Tahiti, the Society, Paumoto, Marquesas); Islands of Western Pacific (Solomons, New Hebrides, Fiji, Tonga); of Central Pacific (Guam, Ladrone, Pelew, Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert, Ellice); of the Detached (Wallis, Penrhyn, Danger, Easter, Rotuma, Futuna, Pitcairn).
CHARLES BROWN, JR., P. O. Box 308, San Francisco, Calif. Inhabitants, history, travel, sports, equipment, climate, living conditions, commerce, pearling, vanilla and coconut culture.

8. ★ Australia and Tasmania
FRANK MORTON, care *Triad* magazine, 19 Castlereagh St., Sydney, Australia. Customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, history. (*Postage ten cents.*)

9. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
FAY-COOPER COLE, Ph. D., Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, inhabitants, history, institutions.

10. ★ New Guinea
L. F. B. ARKELL, Port Moresby, Territory of Papua, *via* Sydney, Australia. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, inhabitants, history, institutions. Questions regarding the measures or policy of the Government or proceedings of Government officers not answered. (*Postage ten cents.*)

11. Philippine Islands
BUCK CONNOR, Quartzsite, Ariz. History, inhabitants, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, commerce.

12. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. HALTON, 714 Marquette Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting,

★ (*Enclose addressed envelop with ten cents in stamps NOT attached*)

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

13. Japan
GRACE P. T. KNUDSON, Castine, Me. Commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

14. Asia Part 1 Arabia, Persia, India, Tibet, Burma, Western China, Borneo.
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, Morgan City, La. Hunting, exploring, traveling, customs.

15. Asia Part 2 Siam, Andamans, Malay Straits, Straits Settlements, Shan States and Yunnan
GORDON MACCREAGH, 21 East 14th St., New York. Hunting, trading, traveling, customs.

16. Asia Part 3 Coast of Northeastern Siberia, and Adjoining Waters
CAPTAIN C. L. OLIVER, care *Adventure*. Natives, language, mining, trading, customs, climate. Arctic Ocean: Winds, currents, depths, ice conditions, walrus-hunting.

17. Asia Part 4 North China, Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan
GEORGE W. TWOMEY, M. D., 41 Rue de France, Tientsin, China. Natives, languages, trading, customs, climate and hunting.

18. Africa Part 1 Sierra Leone to Old Calabar, West Africa, Southern and Northern Nigeria
ROBERT SIMPSON, care *Adventure*. Labor, trade, expenses, outfitting, living conditions, tribal customs, transportation.

19. ✠ Africa Part 2 Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East, Uganda and the Upper Congo
CHARLES BEADLE, Ile de Lerne, par Vannes, Morbihan, Brittany, France. Geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, adventure and sport. (*Postage 12 cents.*)

20. Africa Part 3 Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand
CAPTAIN P. J. FRANKLIN, care Adventurers' Club of Chicago, 40 South Clark St., Chicago, Ill. Climate, shooting and fishing, imports and exports; health resorts, minerals, direct shipping routes from U. S., living conditions, travel, opportunities for employment. Free booklets on: Orange-growing, apple-growing, sugar-growing, maize-growing; viticulture; sheep and fruit ranching.

21. ✠ Africa Part 4 Portuguese East
R. G. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

22. Africa Part 5 Morocco
GEORGE B. HOLT, care *Adventure*. Travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

23. Africa Part 6 Tripoli
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, Morgan City, La. Including the Sahara Tuaregs and caravan routes. Traveling, exploring, customs, caravan trade.

24. Africa Part 7 Egypt, Tunis, Algeria
(Editor to be appointed.) Travel, history, ancient and modern; monuments, languages, races, customs, commerce.

25. Africa Part 8 Sudan
W. T. MOFFAT, 38 Bessborough St., Westminster, London, S. W. 1, England Climate, prospects, trading, traveling, customs, history. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

26. Turkey and Asia Minor
(Editor to be appointed.) Travel, history, geography, races, languages, customs, trade opportunities.

27. Bulgaria, Roumania
(Editor to be appointed.) Travel, history, topography, languages, customs, trade opportunities.

28. Albania
ROBERT S. TOWNSEND, care *Adventure*. History, politics, customs, languages, inhabitants, sports, travel, outdoor life.

29. Jugo-Slavia and Greece
LIEUT. WILLIAM JENNA, Camp Alfred Vail, Oceanport, N. J. History, politics, customs, geography, language, travel, outdoor life.

30. Scandinavia
ROBERT S. TOWNSEND, care *Adventure*. History, politics, customs, language, inhabitants, sports, travel, outdoor life.

31. Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Poland
FRED F. FLEISCHER, 426 15th St., West New York, N. J. History, politics, customs, languages, trade opportunities, travel, sports, outdoor life.

32. South America Part 1 Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

33. South America Part 2 Venezuela, the Guianas and Brazil
DR. H. N. WHITFORD, School of Forestry, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, inhabitants, languages, hunting and fishing.

34. South America Part 3 Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay
WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, Room 424, Fisk Bldg., Broadway at 57th St., New York. Geography, travel, agriculture, cattle, timber, inhabitants, camping and exploration, general information.

35. Central America
CHARLES BELL EMERSON, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif. Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, languages, game, conditions, minerals, trading.

36. Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. WHITAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Border States of old Mexico—Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, inhabitants, hunting, history, industries.

37. Mexico Part 2 Southern; and Lower California
C. R. MAHAFFEY, Santa Clara, Calif. Lower California; Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, inhabitants, business and general conditions.

38. ✠ Canada Part 1 Height of Land and Northern Quebec
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Also Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. Ry.); southeastern Ungava and Keewatin. Sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber, customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

39. ✠ Canada Part 2 Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario
HARRY M. MOORE, Deseronto, Ont., Canada. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel, camping, aviation. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

40. ✠ Canada Part 3 Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario
GEORGE L. CATTON, 94 Metcalfe St., Woodstock, Ont., Canada. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

41. Canada Part 4 Hunters Island and English River District
T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn. Fishing, camping, hunting, trapping, canoeing, climate, topography, travel.

42. Canada Part 5 Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta
ED. L. CARSON, Monroe, Wash. Including Peace River district; to Great Slave Lake. Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

43. ✠ Canada Part 6 Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and Northern Keewatin
REECE H. HAGUE, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

44. ✠ Canada Part 7 New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Southeastern Quebec
JAS. F. B. BELFORD, Codrington, Ont., Canada. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping, auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper industry, water-power. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

45. Alaska
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 1436 Hawthorne Terrace, Berkeley, Calif. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, backpacking, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

46. Baffinland and Greenland
VICTOR SHAW, Shaw Mines Corp., Silverton, Colo. Hunting, expeditions, dog-team work, whaling, geology, ethnology (Eskimo).

47. Western U. S. Part 1 Calif., Ore., Wash., Nev., Utah and Ariz.
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

48. Western U. S. Part 2 New Mexico
H. F. ROBINSON, 200-202 Korber Block, Albuquerque, N. M. Agriculture, automobile routes, Indians, Indian dances, including the snake dance; oil-fields, hunting, fishing, camping; history, early and modern.

49. Western U. S. Part 3 Colo. and Wyo.
FRANK MIDDLETON, 705 So. 1st St., Laramie, Wyo. Geography, agriculture, stock-raising, mining, hunting, fishing, trapping, camping and outdoor life in general.

50. Western U. S. Part 4 Mont. and the Northern Rocky Mountains
CHESTER C. DAVIS, Helena, Mont. Agriculture, mining, northwestern oil-fields, hunting, fishing, camping, automobile tours, guides, early history.

51. Western U. S. Part 5 Idaho and Surrounding Country
OTTO M. JONES, Warden, Bureau of Fish and Game, Boise, Idaho. Camping, shooting, fishing, equipment, information on expeditions, outdoor photography, history and inhabitants.

✠ *(Enclose addressed envelop with three cents in stamps—in Mr. Beadle's case twelve cents—NOT attached)*

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

52. Western U. S. Part 6 Tex. and Okla.
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Minerals, agriculture, travel, topography, climate, hunting, history, industries.

53. Middle Western U. S. Part 1 The Dakotas, Neb., Ia., Kan.
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure*. Hunting, fishing, travel. Especially, early history of Missouri Valley.

54. Middle Western U. S. Part 2 Mo. and Ark.
JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"). Editor *National Sportsman*, 275 Newbury St., Boston, Mass. Also the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big-timber sections.

55. Middle Western U. S. Part 3 Ind., Ill., Mich., Wis., Minn. and Lake Michigan
JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), Editor *National Sportsman*, 275 Newbury St., Boston, Mass. Fishing, clamming, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, early history, legends.

56. Middle Western U. S. Part 4 Mississippi River
GEO. A. ZERR, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton P. O., Ingram, Pa. Routes, connections, itineraries; all phases of river steamer and power-boat travel; history and idiosyncrasies of the river and its tributaries. Questions regarding methods of working one's way should be addressed to Mr. Spears. (*See next section.*)

57. Eastern U. S. Part 1 Miss., O., Tenn., Michigan and Hudson Valleys, Great Lakes, Adirondacks
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Little Falls, N. Y. Automobile, motor-cycle, bicycle and pedestrian touring; shanty-boating, river-tripping; outfit, suggestions, including those for the transcontinental trails; game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs.

58. Eastern U. S. Part 2 Motor-Boat and Canoe Cruising on Delaware and Chesapeake Bays and Tributary Rivers
HOWARD A. SHANNON, 631 East Fifth Street, Chattanooga, Tenn. Motor-boat equipment and management. Oystering, crabbing, eeling, black bass, pike, sea-trout, croakers; general fishing in tidal waters. Trapping and trucking on Chesapeake Bay. Water fowl and upland game in Maryland and Virginia. Early history of Delaware, Virginia and Maryland.

59. Eastern U. S. Part 3 Marshes and Swamplands of the Atlantic Coast from Philadelphia to Jacksonville
HOWARD A. SHANNON, 631 East Fifth Street, Chattanooga, Tenn. Okefinokee and Dismal, Okranoke and the Marshes of Glynn; Croatan Indians of the Carolinas. History, traditions, customs, hunting, modes of travel, snakes.

60. Eastern U. S. Part 4 Southern Appalachians
WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, Room 424, Fisk Bldg., Broadway at 57th St., New York. Alleghanies, Blue Ridge, Smokies, Cumberland Plateau, Highland Rim. Topography, climate, timber, hunting and fishing, automobiling, national forests, general information.

61. Eastern U. S. Part 5 Tenn., Ala., Miss., N. and S. C., Fla. and Ga.
HAPSBURG LIEBE, Box 432, Orlando, Fla. Except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

62. Eastern U. S. Part 6 Maine
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 70 Main Street, Bangor, Me. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

A.—Radio

DONALD MCNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J. Telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets.

B.—Mining and Prospecting

VICTOR SHAW, Shaw Mines Corp., Silverton, Colo. Territory anywhere on the continent of North America. Questions on mines, mining law, mining, mining methods or practise; where and how to prospect, how to outfit; how to make the mine after it is located; how to work it and how to sell it; general geology necessary for miner or prospector, including the precious and base metals and economic minerals such as pitchblende or uranium, gypsum, mica, cryolite, etc. Questions regarding investment or the merits of any particular company are excluded.

C.—Old Songs That Men Have Sung

A department for collecting hitherto unpublished specimens and for answering questions concerning all songs of the out-of-doors that have had sufficient virility to outlast their immediate day; chanteys, "forebitters," ballads—songs of outdoor men—sailors, lumberjacks, soldiers, cowboys, pioneers, rivermen, canal-men, men of the Great Lakes, voyageurs, railroad men, miners, hoboes, plantation hands, etc.—R. W. GORDON, 1,262 Euclid Ave., Berkeley, Calif.

D.—Weapons, Past and Present

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and edged weapons. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district.)

1.—**All Shotguns**, including foreign and American makes; wing shooting. JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), Editor *National Sportsman*, 275 Newbury St., Boston, Mass.

2.—**All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers**, including foreign and American makes. DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. 3, Lock Box 75, Salem, Ore.

3.—**Edged Weapons, and Firearms Prior to 1890**, Swords, pikes, knives, battle-axes, etc., and all firearms of the flintlock, matchlock, wheel-lock and snaphaunce varieties. LEWIS APPLETON BARKER, 40 University Road, Brookline, Mass.

E.—Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), Editor *National Sportsman*, 275 Newbury St., Boston Mass. Fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting and bait; camping-outfits; fishing-trips.

F.—Tropical Forestry

DR. H. N. WHITFORD, School of Forestry, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Tropical forests and forest products; their economic possibilities; distribution, exploration, etc.

G.—Aviation

MAJOR W. G. SCHAUFFLER, JR., National Aeronautic Association, 26 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C. Airplanes: airships; aeronautical motors; airways and landing fields; contests; Aero Clubs; insurance; aeronautical laws; licenses; operating data; schools; foreign activities; publications. No questions answered regarding aeronautical stock-promotion companies.

H.—STANDING INFORMATION

For **Camp-Fire Stations** write J. Cox, care *Adventure*.

For general information on **U. S. and its possessions**, write Supt. of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications. For **U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries**, the Dept. of Com., Wash., D. C.

For the **Philippines, Porto Rico, and customs receiverships in Santo Domingo and Haiti**, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dept., Wash., D. C.

For **Alaska**, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For **Hawaii**, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also Dept. of the Interior Wash., D. C.

For **Cuba**, Bureau of Information, Dept. of Agri., Com. and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The **Pan-American Union** for general information on **Latin-American matters** or for specific data. Address L. S. ROWE, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For **R. C. M. P.**, Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs.

For **Canal Zone**, the Panama Canal Com., Wash., D. C.

National **Rifle** Association of America, Brig. Gen. Fred H. Phillips, Jr., Sec'y, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Wash., D. C.

United States **Revolver** Ass'n. W. A. MORRALL, Sec'y-Treas., Hotel Virginia, Columbus, O.

National parks, how to get there and what to do when there. Address National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

Sport in the Hunters Island District

ANOTHER blanket question which the "A.A." man would be justified in ignoring. However, the inquirer gets an answer—probably for the main reason that he enclosed addressed envelop and postage:

Question:—"Having read in *Adventure* that you were an authority on Hunters Island and English River district I have taken the liberty to write to

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

you for any information you may be able to give on the fishing, hunting, camping, canoeing and climate, also modes of travel and general topography and where I would be able to procure maps of the above mentioned country.

I am enclosing addressed envelop and postage for your early reply."—H. P. GUNNELS, Macon, Ga.

Answer, by Mr. Phillips:—Hunters Island is a Canadian land preserve just across from the Superior National Forest located in northern Minnesota. The only means of travel through any of these forests is by canoe. The English River district lies north of Hunters Island.

The Canadian maps may be secured through the Department of Forest and Mines, Ottawa, Canada. You can secure a good map of Minnesota as to auto and canoe routes through the Ten Thousand Lakes Association, St. Paul, Minn. Under separate cover I will send you canoe maps of the Hunters Island Country and Superior Forest.

The fishing and camping are excellent. Season closed for 1923 on partridge and big game. Open on aquatic fowls. Climate incomparable from July 15 to Sept. 15.

The full statement of the sections, as given in this issue, is printed only in alternate issues.

Rhodesia

A HANDFUL of facts to think over before you go there:

Question:—"Being directed to write to you in regard to certain information that I wish to have of Rhodesia in South Africa, I am taking the liberty of asking a number of questions as regards same.

1. What is the altitude?
2. The climate at all seasons?
3. Is there ivory, diamonds and gold?
4. What is the principal industry?
5. Describe the British South African Mounted Police.
6. Are the natives hostile or sociable?

I am a World's War veteran now serving in the United States Army, soon to be discharged and looking for a new country to migrate to and locate in if suited."—ROY SNYDER, Fitzsimons, Colo.

Answer, by Mr. Beadle:—1. From three to four thousand feet.

2. Varies a little. In the valley of Zambesi fairly warm and humid in the wet season; on the open *veld* warm in daytime with cool nights; malaria more or less prevalent in the wilds.

3. Ivory days are gone; all elephant-shooting is restricted and licenses cost too dear to pay. Never heard of diamonds in the Rhodesias to any extent. Plenty of gold; but all rich man's game, requiring expensive machinery for reef work as on the Rand (Transvaal). Used to be some alluvial and old workings; but these are worked out and wouldn't pay consideration.

4. Farming, cattle-raising and plantations—tobacco, coffee, cotton, etc.; also fruit-growing.

5. (Subject to correction since my day). Military mounted police of the *veld*—duties: Patrols, hut-tax escorts, arresting or hunting criminals, white or native, fighting when any rebellions. Pay five shillings per day—one shilling deferred until end of service—rations, full equipment, accommodations, etc. Period of service is now, I believe, three years; used to be two.

6. Quite sociable now all over.

Can't advise you without knowing your civil qualifications on emigrating out there. Frankly don't think you would stand much of a chance for the police as they are more than probably overwhelmed with applications since the war.

Anything more I can do, just fire along a letter.

Good luck!

More About the Deringer

LIKEWISE a little dissertation on spelling as committed by the Standard Dictionary:

Question:—"In a number of *Adventure* I find a page on the deringer, in which you describe that unique little arm with accurate detail. Reading it led me to get down from a closet shelf a case of my own, that was once the property of the late Major M. H. Bright, who presumably got it when he was with General Thomas in Kentucky during the Civil War. It contains—the velvet-lined case in hand—a brace of deringers that I have long looked upon as being about the last expression in perfection—certainly I have never seen a more beautifully finished modern small arm.

With renewed interest I compared these pistols with the measurements given by you. They are a very little larger than the stock deringer you describe, though similar in every essential detail. The entire length of each of this pair is six and one-half inches, that of the barrel three inches—one-half inch longer than the stock. The bore is three-eighths of an inch—about .45, I think.

While proportioned and marked with all the distinctive engravings that you mention, these pistols, that I suppose were either made to order or for exhibition, are full silver-mounted, with the gold bands, ramrod tips and name-plates that you refer to as distinguishing your dueling-pair, the covered cap-box in the butt, etc. On the left angle of the breech, between the bands and opposite the nipple, is engraved a capital P, slightly larger than the letters of the stamped names, and enclosed in two lunettes of rays. I have supposed that this was something like the mint-mark on a coin, to indicate that the piece was made in Philadelphia.

The barrel bears, like those you have, the names of "Wulf and Durringer Agents Louisvl., Ky." I notice that after the deringer name on stock and breech, the word Philadelphia is abbreviated to Philadel.

These pistols have evidently been used—one more hardly than the other, though both are in fine condition. I would give a good deal to know when or by whom. The case shows indication of use. When the outfit came into my hands there were three or four paper cartridges in their little compartment, and perhaps half a box of percussion caps. The bullet mold has been used, I think.

One more item: Under the trigger guard is a small steel post with two cross borings, like a miniature capstan, the use of which I have not discovered, except that it seems to release the trigger.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

I am not sure why I am writing this. Does it bore you? I am not a collector, either of firearms or of anything else, and my ignorance of the families, tribes, sub-tribes and individuals in the world of weapons would probably shock you, but your page in *Adventure* interested me and has prompted me to talk back."— ——— ———, Tarrytown, N. Y.

Answer, by Mr. Barker:—"Does your letter bore me?" Indeed it does not; in proof of which, busy as I am, I hasten to answer it tonight. I am always glad to receive any communication concerning weapons, particularly firearms, whether a statement or an inquiry.

People are so kind. Some have sent me weapons to see from long distances. A week ago a gentleman came way on from New Jersey to show me a four-barreled flint pistol. I think he felt repaid, as I was able to tell him the uses of a safety and a lock to the barrels, beside historical information.

Even a dear little old lady the other day brought in to the New England Historic Genealogical Society, where I was giving my lecture on arms, a tiny Allen & Wheelock percussion-cap pistol, saying that she thought I might like to use it to illustrate ancient arms. I merely thanked her very much, and explained that I had many lantern slides. She was so certain that it had been in the family for centuries that it seemed a shame to tell her that percussion-cap (proper) weapons did not begin to come into use until about 1825, and that the firm of Allen & Thurber did not become Allen & Wheelock until 1856. Another brought in a powder-flask to show me.

Since I took the ancient-arms section of "Ask Adventure" no less than a dozen correspondents that I have never seen have given me different blades, pistols and guns.

"Deringer," as I note you have observed, is spelled with one "r" only, and of course is so spelled in my original manuscript. The dictionary, however, although stating that it is from the inventor's name, spells it with two "r"s, and I suppose some proof-reader on the magazine thought I had made an error. In the same manner, "Duelling" is spelled with two "l's" in the titles and text of two of the leading works on that subject, and I find it so spelled in a MS. of mine, but when you see it in the magazine it will probably be with one "l," as the dictionary so gives it. Also I spell "bucaneer" so, with one "c," the word being derived from *boucan* and being in French properly *boucanier*. However, to accommodate the dictionary I use two "c's," when using the word in *Adventure*, though reserving my right to use the one "c" in my lecture circulars, one of which, by the way, I enclose. I do so, as there is in it a pen-and-ink sketch of mine of the Blanchard duelling-pistols that I mention in the deringer article.

I am greatly interested in your description of your pair. I have a deringer of exactly the same dimensions, but it is one of the ordinary ones, without cap-box, ramrods or gold trimming. The "P" which you describe, between the bands on the left angle of the breech, is on all mine, and is, as you assume, a sort of "proof-mark." The "Philadel." is always abbreviated that way.

You will recall this statement—

"As they were to be used for duelling, are provided with adjustable hair- or set-triggers."

The "small steel post with two cross borings, like a miniature capstan" is a part of the arrangement for "adjustable hair or set triggers." This particular part is placed both of the following ways:

1.

2.

3.

Probably yours are like No. 2.

You will readily see why it is called a "set" trigger. Cock your piece and snap it. Then press the trigger forward until you hear a click and the trigger catches. Then cock it and snap it. You will find that after "setting" it so, the slightest pressure will fire the piece. Or you may cock it first and then set it. Or you may set it and pull the trigger without cocking it at all.

This is the "Stecher" or hair-trigger, a piece of mechanism—erroneously called by the French sometimes *double entente*—to render almost insensible the concussion produced by the loosing of an ordinary trigger. It was invented by a gunsmith at Munich in1543 and may be adapted to most locks. Nearly all the firearms of German origin of the 16th and 17th centuries were provided with it.

I did not go into detail concerning it in the deringer article, as I had done so to a greater extent in the duelling-pistols article, written for *Adventure* at the same time, published on page 136 of the issue of May 30, 1923.

You may readily see the advantage in having this on duelling-pistols, where accurate aim was desired, and particularly the advantage that might be taken by one murderously inclined and used to duelling, over one who was not so used. The pistols were loaded, *cocked*, and handed to the principals. They stood at a distance, side to each other with the pistol so cocked held down at one side. Usually at the word "one" they raised the pistol, at "two" turned and faced each other, at "three" fired.

Now if a man had never "been out" before and was nervous his hand might tremble so that, touching the trigger ever so gently when held at his side, the ball might go into the ground. In such case he was deemed to have had his shot and would have to receive the other man's fire before his could be reloaded. In the duel between Henry Clay and John Randolph in 1826 the following occurred:

Gen. Jesup was to give the word, and Mr. Randolph asked him to repeat the word as he would give it. While in the act of doing so, and Mr. Randolph was adjusting the butt of his pistol to his hand, the muzzle pointing downward and almost to the ground, it discharged. Instantly Mr. Randolph turned to Col. Tatnall and said—

"I protested against that hair-trigger."

Col. Tatnall took blame on himself for having sprung the hair. This, though clearly an accident,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

gave rise to some remarks that Mr. Clay stopped with the generous assertion that it was clearly an accident. Nevertheless it for a moment unsettled the noble determination of Mr. Randolph not to fire at Mr. Clay.

I should like very much to see your set. I think they would be the smallest pistols that I have ever seen the Stecher applied to.

"Ask Adventure" service costs you nothing whatever but reply postage and self-addressed envelop.

Oregon

THE following is the fifth of a series of half a dozen leaflets that Mr. Harriman had us print up for him dealing with the six States in his charge. Any leaflet, or the whole six of them, may be obtained by applying to him, provided request is accompanied by self-addressed envelop and stamp. Don't expect an answer otherwise.

The first leaflet printed for Mr. Harriman, by the way, described California and appeared in the April 20 issue of our magazine. The second, which discussed Arizona, was published in the May 20 issue; the third, treating on Nevada, was in the June 20 number; and the fourth, dealing with Washington, was in the July 10 magazine.

OREGON covers 96,000 square miles with elevations running from sea level up to 11,000 feet or more. It has all kinds of climates, due to changes in elevation, difference in rainfall and distance from the influence of the Japan Current. West of the Cascade Mountains lie the great forest lands and the wonderful agricultural lands, where crop failures are practically unknown.

The forests of Oregon produce some of the finest timber in the entire world. The rivalry between Oregon and Washington in this line resulted in a contest, while the Panama Canal was being dug, in the course of which dredger-timbers were sawed by rival mills 20 x 40 inches in size and from 96 feet to 108 feet in length, without one defect in the entire timber. These were taken from trees that grew to more than a hundred feet in height before a limb bigger than the wrist of a man showed on them. Such trees often measure 200 to 250 feet in total length, from ground to crown.

Oregon produces a moderate amount of gold, some fair amount of silver, copper and other metals, a moderate amount of non-metallic minerals and excellent building-stone. She raises splendid cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, Angora goats and poultry, with immense crops of grain, vegetables, fruit and berries. Her rainfall varies from 60 inches per annum west of the Cascades down to 4 inches in some parts of the southeastern section. She has a vast acreage of good land that can be developed if water is caught in the watersheds and carried out to the land by canals.

The wealth of the salmon-fisheries industry is enormous there. There is beyond all doubt an almost incredible amount of wealth still undeveloped in her minerals, for widely scattered indications point to large deposits still hidden, all over the State.

Oregon has many industries, and the number is increasing daily. Her rivers are a great source of wealth, furnishing cheap transportation by way of river and sea to the markets of the world, besides watering great areas of semi-arid land and bringing in the salmon.

Eventually great irrigation projects will reclaim millions of acres of land now fit only for sheep-range and make it valuable as agricultural and horticultural land.

There is much wild game in Oregon, and fine fishing is found in her rivers, creeks and lakes. Her scenery is magnificent. It is possible still to get into wild country in Oregon, where the tin lizzie is never seen, heard or felt. Where a man can eat venison and wander through thick forests. Or a man can lose himself on the wide, dry plains of her eastern, unsettled portion.

Oregon builds ships for world trade and ships lumber half-way around the world. Her great waterway, the Columbia-Willamette combination, is unsurpassed, deep-sea ships finding safe channels clear to Portland. The writer has boarded English, French, American and Chinese ships on the same day at Portland wharves.

There are large areas in Oregon without railroads or good wagon roads, that some day will have both. Some of these are forested, and some are sagebrush land. Oregon owns some of the most interesting of the world's caverns and some of the most beautiful mountains. Her waterfalls are exceptionally fine and her floral products exquisite.

All in all Oregon is a State to be proud of and one capable of almost unlimited development, her water-power alone giving her a solid basis for future expansion and enlarged wealth.—E. E. HARRIMAN.

Trips out of Montreal

FINE vacation country whichever way you turn:

Question:—"I wish you would give me some information and advice concerning an automobile tour of southern Canada, or at least as much of it as can be covered by easy stages in three weeks.

We expect to start about the middle of July, going in from the New York side by way of Montreal. We would like to camp out along the road if possible and would like to know if this is permissible.

Would also like to know something about roads, points of interest, equipment and whatever other information along this line that you may see fit to give.

Is it necessary to get a permit to fish?"—CHARLES S. HANNAN, Saranac Lake, N. Y.

Answer, by Maj. Belford:—When you reach Montreal you may turn east or west; you do not say which is your choice. However, we will turn west first.

From Montreal you will travel the island of Montreal to Ste. Anne de Bellevue, where Macdonald College will repay a visit. Cross by ferry to Isle Perrot, cross the island and ferry again to the Ontario side of the Ottawa River. You can then proceed up the right bank of the Ottawa as far as Ottawa City. A beautiful city in itself, with our Parliament building, etc.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

From Ottawa you can take the new road to Prescott and then follow the Government highway to Toronto. You are running along the St. Lawrence, past the Thousand Islands, the Bay of Quinte and Lake Ontario. Scenery fine.

From Toronto you can proceed to Niagara Falls, crossing there into the U. S. and returning *via* Buffalo, Syracuse, etc., to Saranac. Or if you have the time you can continue west from Toronto to Windsor and cross there to Detroit, returning on the U. S. side.

Taking this trip, a pleasant side trip would be from Cobourg to Rice Lake—good fishing—or from Toronto north to Barrie and Crillia on Lake Simcoe.

If you turn east at Montreal you can proceed over a splendid road along the north shore of the St. Lawrence to Quebec, the most picturesque city in Canada. While there see Montmorency Falls and the famous shrine of Ste. Anne de Beaupré.

Cross on the ferry from Quebec to Levis, where you have a further choice. You can either go south over the Jackman road to Bangor, Me., and back to Saranac *via* Augusta and through Vermont and New Hampshire, or you can go down the south shore of the St. Lawrence through the Matapedia Valley into New Brunswick. Go by Campbellton, Dalhousie, Moncton, St. John, crossing into Maine and through Aroostook County to Bangor.

Technically it is necessary to get a fishing-license. But your fishing, I take it, will be only for the pan as you travel. I don't think you will have any trouble.

No trouble about camping. Put out your fire. For equipment write Raymond S. Spears. Either way you should have a fine trip.

In Montreal inquire at the Automobile Association Bureau at the Windsor Hotel for the latest dope on roads. Free and efficient service. *Bon voyage!*

Getting a Gun for an Aussie

CONCERNING the subjoined Q and A, "Ol' Man Wiggins" writes me: "Two letters from Australia this same day, both after the same thing—want me to buy them revolvers. Wonder what's starting over there:"

Question:—"Do you remember me writing to you from New Zealand some time ago about a revolver? Well, I got your reply and wrote to that firm you mentioned and never got any answer. I know you don't deal in firearms; but would you oblige me by getting me a .44-cal., 9-inch-barrel Colt's revolver, holster and cartridge belt? Please let's know the price and I will send you money to buy it and send it over."—E. Goodwin, St. George, Queensland, Australia.

Answer, by Mr. Wiggins:—Yes, I recall your letter quite well. I regret that you never heard from the address I gave, but perhaps the next time will be satisfactory.

Now in regard to a revolver: I never sell anything to inquirers, but I will do this much: I am getting quotations on two types of Colt .45-caliber revolvers, one the old Frontier Model, the cowboy's gun, and the later and more modern New Service, both with 7½-inch barrels, the longest made today. Also belt and holster for each arm.

I have asked the dealer where I trade for these prices. The firm's address is Hauser Brothers, State Street, Salem, Oregon, U. S. A.

I know this firm to be reliable, as I trade with them and have done so for years.

The prices are as follows: New Service, $31; Single Action Army, $29; belt $3; holster $3.50. I enclose pages from Colt's catalog to show the revolvers, in case you are not familiar with them.

You will have to see about local permits, duties, etc., at that end of the road. After securing the local authorities' consent to purchase the revolver, send a postal draft or money-order to Hauser Brothers, and they will send you the revolver and fittings. That's really the best I am in a position to do.

The Trout of Trapper's Lake

HERE'S a little trick with a grasshopper and a leaf that has brought the big wary ones to bank:

Question:—"I would be deeply obliged to you if you could inform me whereabout in Colorado one could get some good trout-fishing.

My father and I have been planning on a real fishing-trip for three or four years, and it looks as though we were going to get to take it in July or August.

We are both strong for outdoor stuff and want to find some place as near virgin territory as possible as we like to get off by ourselves on a trip of this kind.

We plan on driving a car, that is to say a Ford, and would like to get it as close to where we would camp as possible.

I once made the trip from Denver over Berthoud Pass to Salt Lake on a motorcycle, but it seemed as though good fishing was at a premium over that route, although possibly it was because we didn't look in the right places.

We expect to have about a month for the trip.

This will likely be our last big trip as father is now sixty-seven years old, but a better sportsman never lived, so you can see how we would appreciate some first-hand information.

Also we would like to know what flies or bait would likely be best for that time of the year."—H. F. Dobson, Wichita, Kans.

Answer, by Mr. Middleton:—I think I have the very spot for you in mind; it comes as near to being virgin territory as any spot in Colorado.

Trapper's Lake is in the neighborhood of one hundred and eighty miles from Denver, and I believe is by this time reached by auto. They started two years ago to build an auto road right to the lake, and I have heard since that it had been completed. I am sure you couldn't find a more ideal spot for an outing.

The trout are all "live ones," natives and rainbows, and there are sure a plenty of them. You'll certainly have no fault to find on that score.

To reach this place you cross Berthoud Pass, same as you did on your former trip. Pass through Kremmling and on to Yampa. I am not sure about Yampa, for I seem to remember that some one told me there was a shorter road by way of McCoy, but I think the Yampa road is the best.

For flies I'd suggest the following: Nothing smaller than a No. 10; gray hackle, brown hackle,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

coachman, royal **coachman**, **ginger**-quill, queen of the waters, black **gnat**, **white** miller, grizzly king, Rio Grande-King; **also a silver** doctor or two apiece, for I've had them **hit a doctor** when they positively wouldn't rise to **anything else** (curiosity perhaps). Then you will **want a few, say,** a half-dozen apiece, of extra large flies **for the extra** big ones you'll locate.

You will also want a **supply** of spinners, but they will be used chiefly **for lake-fishing**, while a half-dozen snell hooks will be **a plenty** for bait-fishing. You'll not do much **bait-fishing** at the time of the year you count on going.

I believe I'd start with **a half-dozen** spinners (assorted) each. If you find a big one that refuses to rise, try hooking a small grasshopper, place it on a leaf and float it over the hole where you know the big one is lying; I got a five and three-quarter pounder last Summer in this way.

If you want to know more about the country, write to Scott Teague, Yampa. Don't know but what I'd write to him anyway about the road, but I am certain one can get clear to the lake by auto now.

I am sure you will have a bully good time, and I would like to hear from you after you have had the trip. If you have a .30-30, or anything like that, take it along, for there are still mountain lion and bear around there. If I can help any further, don't hesitate to ask again.

P. S.—I forgot to say that Yampa is the outfitting-point for the Trapper's Lake country.

Tarahumares

WHERE an education consists of a hair-cut, as it were:

Question:—"Can you tell me about the Tarahumare Indians, who, I understand, inhabit the country back of where you reside, in the Sierra Madre Mountains?

I have heard that these Indians are great runners and can run as fast as a good horse. Any information you can give me will be appreciated."—JAMES CANFIELD, Newberry, S. C.

Answer, by Mr. Mahaffey:—The Tarahumares live in the valleys and *barrancas* of the Sierra Madre, which lies along the borders of the States of Sinaloa and Chihuahua. They are a very timid race of people, who do not associate with the whites or Mexicans to any extent.

They are to be always known from other Indians by the fact that they have their legs bare in any and all kinds of weather, and that they wear their hair long, hanging down their backs, while other Indians wear their hair short.

They are a very simple and primitive sort of people. One of their medicine-men once, it is said, cut his hair off to get some new ideas, and while it was growing out he tied up his head to keep the new ideas from escaping.

These Indians do not pay any taxes to the Mexican Government and have their own chiefs; but as they are inoffensive they are not molested. Their houses are very simple, usually made by setting up forked poles, across which they lay straight poles, and these are covered by slabs and smaller brush. Sometimes they make houses of small rocks, which are covered by grass. Some of them live in the natural caves which are found in great numbers in the Sierra.

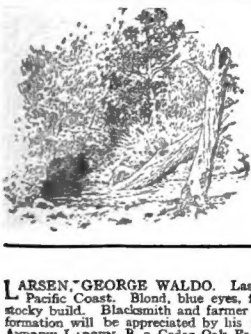
The [illegible]ove about quite a bit, and live principally by hun[illegible]g and the cultivation of corn and beans. They make storehouses in the forks of large trees, in which are stored their surplus crops.

They are not very sociable or industrious, and are very fond of lying in the hot sun. They are great runners and have been known to travel for days, stopping only to eat and sleep. Their usual gait is a trot, and they will outdistance a horse.

The chiefs carry a cane made of Brazil wood, which is a sign of authority. These canes are highly respected, and only the older men have them.

The Tarahumares are very superstitious, and are afraid to travel at night on account of the ghosts who are supposed to be traveling around. The medicine-man is an important person and is called on at marriages *fiestas*, births and sickness.

This is about all the data I can give you. I hope it will suit your purpose.



LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible*. All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

LARSEN, GEORGE WALDO. Last heard of on the Pacific Coast. Blond, blue eyes, five foot six inches, stocky build. Blacksmith and farmer by trade. Any information will be appreciated by his father.—Address L. ANDREW LARSEN, R. 2, Cedar Oak Farm, Benton Harbor, Michigan.

L. A. C. Am very anxious to hear from you. Please write. —Address MOTHER, Gen. Delivery, Los Angeles, Calif.

STEIGERWALD, CHARLES F. Born in Germany. Left his home in Boston, Mass., in 1892, at the age of seventeen years. Any information will be greatly appreciated by his mother.—Address MRS. MARY ROSE, 2238 W. Madison St., Chicago, Ill.

GAGE, WILLIAM. Was around the northern part of Maine 28 or 29 years ago. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write.—Address S. E. E., care of *Adventure*.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Inquiries will be printed three times, then taken out. In the February 10th issue all unfound names asked for during the past two years will be reprinted alphabetically.

MCKAY, EARL. In the Signal Corps in Alaska. Please write to me.—Address F. A. SWIHM, 82 W. Eagle St., East Boston, Mass.

NAYLE, HAROLD B. Left his home at Moatsville, W. Virginia in 1920. Ex-service man; traveling salesman by trade. Any information will be appreciated by his brother.—Address FORREST C. NAYLE, Co. C, 30th Inf. Presidio of San Francisco, Calif.

MCCALLISTER, WM. R. Telegraph Operator, Cotton Belt & Nickel Plate, N. Y. and C. P. Certificate No. 48877. Any information will be appreciated by his brother. —Address LEON MCCALLISTER, 734 10th Ave,. Huntington, W. Virginia.

BEACH, L. A. Please write to mother as she is greatly worried about you.—Address MRS. CHAS. CAMPBELL, 715 Witherbee St., Flint, Mich.

SCHMOLL, EDWARD. Resident of Pittsburgh, Pa. Please write giving your present address.—Address RICHARD ZORN, North Baltimore, Ohio.

EDENS, FRED CLARK. Was Marine from 1903 to 1906. Last heard from on the battleship *Brooklyn* in the New York Harbor in 1906. Age about forty years, very tall and fair complexion. Any information will be appreciated by his sister.—Address IDA EDENS ANDERSON, 206½ Charleston St., Charleston, W. Va.

DELMAS, NICK. Do you remember the times in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona with Joy's gang? Wrote you; Cape Town, S. Africa, care of S. S. *Adria*. I still mean that trip to S. A. Let's hear from you.—Address P. W. KOSSAR, care of *Adventure*.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

R. W. B., JR. Who left home March 17th 1923. Will not interfere with your plans. Please write us where you are. We must hear from you.—"GLOOM."

DONAHUE, THOMAS F. Last heard of in 1918. Was then working for Federal Government at Oregon. Any information will be appreciated.—Address D. H. DONAHUE, Wailupe, Oahu, T. H.

LUTHER, ROBERT. Age forty-two years, tall, slender, light complexion, gray eyes and gray hair. Last heard from in Bartlesville, Okla., Dec. 25th, 1919. At that time he was thinking of going to Arizona. Painter and paperhanger by trade. Any information will be appreciated by his sister.—Address MRS. L. HENDRICKS, 13 S. Florence Ave., Rosedale, Kansas.

THE following have been inquired for in either the June 30th or July 20th issues of Adventure. They can get the name and address of the inquirer from this magazine:

BRANCHER, G. W.; Cleland, Herbert; Drewes, Harold V. (Tex) Ebery, Gordon; Flinn, Huck; Gevert, Richard; Hirtle, Reginald; Hollman, Harry; Krough, John; Key, Maggie; Krestoslar, Jerry; Kubik, Charles J.; Lewis, Arthur C.; Lyman, Robert; McCutcheon, Ernest; McGovern, Thomas P., Moore, Robert (Bob); Murphy, Esmond R.; O'Rourke, John; Orvin, W.; Richards, Cleon; Roycroft, Lloyd C.; Rucker, C. Ryan; Russell, Robert Lawrence; Whitefoot, Jack.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

MISCELLANEOUS—Boys of Troop "G" and 7th Cavalry; Company "M" 23rd Infantry; Members of 51st Aero Squadron, Mineola.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

AUGUST 20TH ISSUE

Besides the **new serial** and the **three novelettes** mentioned on the second page of this issue, the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

ATMOSPHERE — *H. S. Cooper*
A Western "local-color" seeker—and what he found.

ONE YOUNG, ONE WIDOW, ONE OLD — *Thomas Topham*
A whaler slipped the Eskimos some rubber gum-drops. And then the trouble began.

THE THREE PALLADINS A Three-Part Story Conclusion — *Harold Lamb*
"The Great Wall has fallen. *Genghis Khan* is upon us."

9 EAST An Off-the-Trail Story* — *Robert Russell Strang*
Jamie Ramsay, the mine boss, said it was dangerous.

A PART OF EVERY MAN — *Henry M. Haldeman*
Western man-hunters.

**See note at foot of first contents page.*

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Take a Kodak with you

Autographic Kodaks *$6.50 up*

Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N.Y., *The Kodak City*

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Everybody's Magazine

published these popular novels *before* they appeared in book form.

Be one of the first to read the three stirring novels appearing *now* in EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE.

In the AUGUST issue you'll find—

Mellowane Money — Francis Lynde

The Bucoleon Treasure — A. D. Howden Smith

The Thoroughbred — Mrs. Wilson Woodrow

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA